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THE FAMILY DIAMONDS

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Marigold," "Breaking the Charm," &c., &c.

CHAPTER I. V.

Stars of the winter night!
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light!

She sleeps!

My lady sleeps!

Sleeps!

Moon of the winter night,
Far down yon western steeps,
Sink, sink in silver light!

She sleeps!

My lady sleeps!

Sleeps!

Spanish Student.

WITH the characteristic recklessness of a young man, Frank Burgoyne did not attach much importance to the serious quarrel which had taken place between himself and his father.

He had felt for some time that his stepmother's influence would triumph, and that she would bring about a breach which would drive him from the paternal roof.

This had actually come to pass, and now he was a wanderer, without an allowance, dependent upon his own exertions for obtaining a subsistence.

But youth is full of hope.

His pride would not allow him to make any advances towards a reconciliation, and he trusted that some of the rich, influential friends whose acquaintance he had made at the University of Cambridge would render him some assistance in his hour of need.

He had seen poor men at college taken by the hand by noblemen who wished for a tutor or a companion during their travels, and he thought he might, without presumption, aspire to some such post.

Tired of the dissolute life he had been leading he was almost glad, on reflection, that want of money would put an end to it, for he would not have had sufficient resolution to do so had not his expensive habits been checked in the violent and sudden manner we have described.

THE TEMPTER.]

He was not in immediate want of money, for lenders of that useful commodity had forced its acceptance upon him, and there was a handsome sum standing to his credit at his bankers.

When he left Billingshurst Hall he walked moodily through the snow to the nearest inn, where he stopped for the night.

His mind being perturbed, his rest was feverish and fitful.

Rising at daybreak, he partook of a meagre breakfast, paid his bill, and went along the high road until he came to a pretty, old-fashioned house, standing by itself.

The walls were covered with a dense growth of ivy, clematis, and other creepers, which gave shelter to flocks of birds.

Here lived Mr. Waldon, a surgeon, who had considerable practice in the vicinity.

His family consisted only of his wife and himself, a son and a daughter.

The son was educated for the medical profession, preferring to follow in his father's footsteps, and was fortunate enough, at the age of five-and-twenty, to obtain the appointment of surgeon in the county jail.

His sister Agnes was a lovely girl, with fair, silken hair and soft blue eyes, which melted with dove-like sweetness. Her teeth were like tiny pearls set in red coral, her hands and feet small and dainty, her figure petite and symmetrical, while her voice was sweet and low, which, the poet tells us, is an excellent thing in woman.

Frank Burgoyne had met Agnes Waldon two years before the opening of our story when she was but seventeen.

To see her was to love her, and she became easily captivated by the open, manly face of the handsome heir to the vast wealth of the Burgoynes.

No actual engagement existed between them, though he was a constant guest of the Waldons, and the father tacitly encouraged the growing intimacy between them.

That they loved one another with a fervent affec-

tion there was no doubt, but Frank thought himself too young to marry, and preferred to wait until he was fairly started in life before he made a declaration from which he could not escape.

It being early in the morning Frank arrived before Agnes was up, and, gazing tenderly at the window of the room in which he knew she slept, he began to sing the first verses of a serenade, trusting that she would hear his voice and come down to him.

What was his surprise when a footstep grated on the gravel behind him, and as a heavy hand fell on his shoulder a cheery voice exclaimed :

"You are up betimes, Frank, my boy. I did not know you cultivated such early hours or that your musical attainments were so high. You should go on the stage and try your chance in the part of a sentimental lover."

In some confusion Frank looked up and saw Mr. Waldon, to whom he said :

"Have you been to attend a patient, sir?"

"I have," was the reply, "and have had a hard night's work. They give me little peace, and I do not know that I shall not be sent for by some one else before I have had my breakfast. A doctor's life in the country is a hard one—plenty of work but little pay; but, thank Heaven, I have health and strength, and poor men must work, you know. It is not every one who is born with a silver spoon in his mouth—like the heir of the Burgoynes."

Frank smiled faintly.

"I am afraid I have lost mine," he exclaimed. "For unless things take a change now I shall have to look out for the necessities of life."

Mr. Waldon became grave.

He was a worldly minded man, and had encouraged Frank's addresses to his daughter simply because he was the best match in the country and he wished the girl to marry him in order that she might support him in his old age if he required it.

Frank rich and favoured by his father was a very different personage from Frank poor and in disgrace.

Frank did not notice the cloud upon his brow or the anxious expression on his face.

If any one had told him that Mr. Waldon was a mercenary man he would not have believed him, and he fancied in the simplicity of his heart that he would be as welcome a guest without or with the prospect of being his father's heir.

In this belief he was egregiously mistaken, as he was speedily to discover.

"What has happened?" asked Mr. Waldon, "nothing of an unpleasant nature I hope. If the bank in which your respected father put his money has suspended payment he has land and those precious family diamonds."

"Oh, as for that, my father is well enough off. No fear of his losing any money," replied Frank.

"Ha, ha! you were joking with me I see. Of course you will stay to breakfast, and in fact spend the day with us?"

"Thank you," answered Frank. "If you are hospitably inclined I may make a long stay, for I want a home."

The cloud which had passed away from Mr. Waldon's face for a moment returned with increased force and lowered more blackly than ever.

Standing against the garden gate so that Frank Burgoynes could not enter, unless he wished it, the doctor exclaimed:

"Then there is something wrong. What is it, my dear boy?"

"I look upon you as my friend," replied Frank, "and I will tell you unrestrainedly. You know that my stepmother has been trying to supplant me in my father's affections for a long time, and prejudice him against me?"

"You have hinted as much."

"Well, she has succeeded at last. Only yesterday evening we had a scene. I am too old now and too proud to be dictated to. My father used words which I consider he had no right to employ. I retaliated. The consequence was that I was ordered out of the house, told that my allowance would be stopped, and that I might do what I could."

"This is serious," said Mr. Waldon. "Why did you not conciliate your father?"

"I would not trouble myself to conciliate the best man that ever breathed if he were in the wrong. That is not my disposition," replied Frank.

"Don't you think it very foolish to lose a fine allowance, a splendid fortune and a good home?"

"Possibly. It is an infirmity of temper I suppose which I cannot help," said Frank.

"But the world, dear boy," continued Mr. Waldon, "will soon knock that nonsense out of your head. When a man is without money and without friends—"

"Then learning is most excellent, as the song says. What is the verse? When house and lands and money are spent then learning is most excellent, for education will land a man somewhere. A Cambridge man is sure to fall on his feet."

"I don't know that," said Mr. Waldon, gravely. "It seems to me that you have misused your opportunity and that as far as learning goes you could better play a game at billiards or whist than you could translate Homer or Virgil. Besides, education is a drug in the market. We have established school after school until we have over educated. What is the use of a scholar in these days? If a man can work or is a skilled mechanic he can command employment and wages where you educated gentlemen would starve."

Frank Burgoynes face flushed angrily.

He had not been accustomed to be spoken to in this way, and Mr. Waldon put the matter before him in a new light.

"I do not like observations of this sort," he exclaimed, "and I will not tolerate such impertinence from you or any one."

"You may please yourself," replied Mr. Waldon, carelessly.

"If I had asked you for assistance you could not have spoken with more brutal harshness. I did not allow my father to dictate to me, and I am not going to put up with your insulting remarks."

"I see no reason why you should," said the surgeon, "but be good enough to remember that you related what had happened in a friendly way and I only commented in a similar manner upon what I can only call your folly."

"It is my business, not yours," said the young man, biting his lips.

"It became my business for your sake when you took me into your confidence, and I repeat that I think you acted very foolishly in angering your father."

"I know the rupture would come sooner or later. It did not matter to me which way it was. I feel perfectly independent of the whole world," said Frank.

"Very well. If you will not be talked to there is

an end of the discussion. By all means go and enjoy your independence, Mr. Burgoynes."

Frank checked his angry retort as he thought of Agnes, whom he wished to see with a passionate longing only lovers can understand.

"You asked me to breakfast," he exclaimed, with a forced smile.

"Did I?" answered Mr. Waldon, with a curl of the lip. "Really it was very forgetful of me. I have a consultation in half an hour and am extremely sorry I shall be unable to receive you."

"Do you forbid me your house?"

"Oh, no. Come when I am not busy—at present you really must pardon me," replied Mr. Waldon.

"I should like to see Mrs. Waldon or Agnes," persisted Frank; "we will put up with your enforced absence."

"Again pardon me. They are going out. Good-morning, Mr. Burgoynes," exclaimed the doctor, coldly.

The dismissal was unmistakable.

Frank could not be blind any longer to Mr. Waldon's meaning, and feeling sick at heart he exchanged his bag, which the doctor shook coldly.

"I hope you will soon adjust the difference between your father and yourself," he said, "If so let me know. I shall be glad to hear of your returning like the Prodigal Son. No doubt they will kill the fatted calf for you, Mr. Burgoynes."

"You may depend upon one thing," answered Frank, "and that is I shall never give them the chance. Had my poor mother been alive this would never have happened; but since that snake, my stepmother, has ruled the roost I have been treated with a harshness and indignity I will never put up with from anybody, relation or no relation."

"Possibly you understand your affairs, but, excuse me, this is valuable. You are an idle man, you know," exclaimed the doctor, with a courtly smile.

Frank winced, but he made no answer, turned coolly on his heel and walked away with rapid strides.

He was sensible enough now to see that Mr. Waldon did not want him as a sailor for his daughter's hand. He was poor and dismissed from his father's house. That made all the difference. Nor could he blame the doctor. A father can usually forgive faults in a future son-in-law who is rich, but when the case is altered he becomes alive to the smallest shortcomings.

In truth, Frank Burgoynes had not an enviable reputation. It was said that he was a gambler and a rascal. He had been sent away from Cambridge for twelve months, owing to a glaring breach of the college rules, and Mr. Waldon thought of all these rumours, which he had heard.

Major Burgoynes had married again, he had children by his second wife, who was sure to have great control over an old man, she being young, handsome and impetuous. The estate was not entailed, therefore the major could leave his property to whom he liked.

It appeared to Frank that Mr. Waldon did not want him at his house, yet he could not leave the neighbourhood without seeing Agnes.

How to contrive an interview he did not know.

After walking a mile he came to an inn and going into the parlour wrote a note begging her to meet him at the cross roads, a spot about half a mile from her father's place.

He fixed the hour at twelve o'clock and was at the trysting spot at least half an hour before the time.

Would she come? That was the question with which he vexed his mind. Would her father order her not to see him under any circumstances, and would she obey the harsh mandate?

He felt sure she would not. She had told him she loved him as he knew now, more than ever, that he loved her.

Fortunately for the success of his enterprise, Mr. Waldon, owing to his practice as a medical man, was very little at home. That would afford Agnes an opportunity of slipping out unobserved and enable her to meet her lover.

Bitterly Frank reproached himself for his fast life, as well as for his obstinacy in meeting his father.

It had come home to him now, all his nocturnal escapades at Cambridge, his card playing and his wasted hours.

Yes. It had come home to him, as it is sure to do to every man who is foolish enough to sacrifice the future for the present.

He saw clearly enough when it was too late that by quarrelling with his father he had given his stepmother the very advantage that she had been seeking for.

Many people passed by along the cross roads and wondered who the tall, handsome, pale-faced young man was who seemed rooted to the spot.

"All these persons," he said, aloud, "have some business or occupation. I have none. What shall I do?"

A voice at his elbow exclaimed:

"I will tell you."

Frank Burgoynes turned round quickly and found himself confronted with a thick-set, burly, ill-looking man, who looked to his imagination half brigand, half murderer.

CHAPTER V.

For he through sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss;
Had signed to many, though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his.

Byron.

"Who are you, and by what right do you dare to talk to me?" inquired Frank, angrily, at the uncovenanted interruption.

"Never mind who I am," answered the stranger. "I know who you are. Your name is Burgoynes; you have been dismissed from your father's house, and have nothing to hope for from him in future."

Frank was astonished at this revelation, for he did not recognize his accuser in the least.

"This is an impertinence," he exclaimed. "We are strangers. Go your way and let me go mine. When I want your advice or assistance I will ask for it, until then do not presume to speak to me again."

"Allow me one word. Servants will talk, and I have heard about your rupture with the major from one in the house. He has cast you off with a shilling."

"Has he altered his will?" asked Frank, changing colour visibly.

"The lawyer was with him this morning. Now if I were you I would help myself."

"To what? You talk in a strangely mysterious way. I do not understand you."

"You have seen the family diamonds," answered the stranger. "They are worth at least a quarter of a million. Take them. The major would never prosecute his own son. I will help you to—"

Frank had been fuming angrily while the stranger was speaking, and in rage at this infamous proposition was so great that he would not allow the man to complete his sentence.

"If you are not gone instantly," he exclaimed, "I will throw you over the nearest hedge. What rob my own father! They have behaved disreputably on one or two occasions, but I have not seen so low as that yet."

"Dingwall!" cried the stranger, "and you are a dead man. I allow no one to lay a finger on me. What I said was for your good. If you will not assert your rights, perhaps you will be sorry some day, and if the time should come remember Dingwall told you so."

With this the fellow vaulted lightly over a stile, and was soon lost to sight.

Knowing nothing about Miss Venner's private affairs, he was ignorant of the fact that her brother's alias in the various circles in which he moved was Dingwall.

This man had been hanging about the neighbourhood since his interview with his sister and had heard of Frank's expulsion from his father's house.

As he had often been to Bliflhurst Hall to see Miss Venner he had had an opportunity of seeing the inmates and was well acquainted with their features.

His meeting with Frank at the cross roads was accidental, but when he told him he conceived the brilliant idea of making the son an accomplice in the robbery of his father, thinking he was in a fit frame of mind to embrace any desperate undertaking.

If Frank had accepted his proposal he felt sure that in the event of detection the major would not prosecute his own son—familial pride would prevent him from doing so—and thus the risk would be decreased to a minimum.

The idea was thoroughly in keeping with the desperate nature of Dingwall, who was fertile in expedients and daring as he was unscrupulous.

Frank had little time allowed him to indulge his indignation, for a few minutes after the burglar's departure he saw the form of his beloved Agnes approaching, and his thoughts turned into another channel.

Miss Waldon stuck him by the hand and looking up tearfully in his face exclaimed:

"Oh, Frank, I have had such difficulty in meeting you. My father told me you were a scamp, and that I should never meet you again for fear of his displeasure. If he had not been called away suddenly to attend a patient I could not have come."

"Do you believe him, my pet?" answered Frank, drawing her to him and kissing her. "If so you are to blame for granting the request contained in my note."

"Oh, no; I am sure there is a mistake somewhere. But what have you done?" she said.

"Nothing very dreadful, darling. I have only offended my father, who has forbidden me his house. He wanted me to go abroad and work for my living. I am willing to do so, but I would not be dictated to even by him. If he had talked in a less detestable manner and not given way to the prejudice my stepmother has instilled into his mind all would have been well."

"That dreadful woman. You have spoken to me of her, Frank," exclaimed Agnes. "You had misgivings about her?"

"Simply because I knew she was my enemy and expected that she would triumph over me, owing to her influence over a weak-minded old man like my father."

"Is that all?" she asked.

"I have not concealed anything from you, dearest. I came home last night to celebrate the old man's birthday, and a quarrel ensued which had been fomented by Mrs. Burgoyne. She is constantly at the major's side, and he becomes irritated by her misrepresentations. I do not say that I am fearless, but I do maintain that I am not worthy of the curse I have incurred or the sentence of expulsion and disinheritance which has been passed upon me. There will, however, be all the more for her children, and that is her aim."

"Why this?" she inquired, innocently, "are not you a good match?"

"My simple little unworthy child," answered Frank, holding her hand in his and looking tenderly into her face, "what a baby you are. Your father has to work for his income, and work hard. You are his only daughter, and he wants you to make a good match."

"Well," she inquired, innocently, "are not you a good match?"

"Not now. I was when I was the supposed heir to my father's wealth. Things have changed. My prospects are black and dreary. I couldn't keep a wife. I am nobody now, and your father perhaps is right in keeping us apart; but I could not go away until I had said adieu to you, darling, and owed you my warmest thanks for not joining in the cry against me, and coming here to see me when I have fallen so low as to be avoided by your family."

"My father has been hasty; he has acted on a wrong conception," said Agnes. "Dare I show him. You will ask your father's forgiveness and all will yet go well."

"That I cannot do," replied Frank, sadly, and with a slight tinge of bitterness in his tone. "Are you mercenary too, Agnes? Do you not care for me now you know I am poor?"

"I love you, Frank—you have forced the admission from me by your cruel words—I love you—much more, if possible, now than I did before, because I feel a deep sympathy with you in your misfortune," replied Agnes Waldon.

"Bless you, my own! We have never told our love before, and it is very bitter to have to confess it under these circumstances."

"Why?"

"I cannot marry you now; it would be against your father's wish, and, poor and discarded as I am, I could not bring you to my own miserable breast."

"But you can work, Frank. I will put up with any hardships," she said.

"You think you could, yet you would find married life intolerably irksome, my dearest one, if you were unable to pay the butchers and the bakers." "No, Aggy darling, we must wait and hope for better times. Rest assured that I shall never, never cease to love you. For the present I am alone in the world, and the only thing which will cause me to cling to life is the certainty that you love me."

Agnes Waldon's tears flowed afresh.

"Oh, go to your father and make it up," she cried. "I am sure he must love the son of his first wife better than the children of his second."

"You know not what you ask, Agnes," answered Frank Burgoyne. "My pride is so great that if I were starving to-morrow I would not ask my father for a crust of bread. It would be too great a triumph for my stepmother, who hates me as much as I detest her."

"What shall I do without you, Frank?"

"Remember that you possess my heart, and that whatever fate befalls me, dearest, I shall always love you. The day may come when I can claim you as my wife and your friends will have no aversion to me. I will strive hard for it."

"Well," exclaimed Agnes, drying her tears, "I will be brave. I will wait for that happy day, dear Frank, and show you that I am worthy of your great love."

"Bless you, my darling. Good-bye now. I am going to London, and you will see that in a short time I will disperse the enemies of my enemies and show them that I am not the idle spendthrift they used to make me out."

"I shall pray for you always, Frank. Good-bye," she said.

He wrung her hand with silent emotion, and, imprinting one loving kiss upon her willing lips, rushed away, unable to remain any longer, for he felt that he must burst into tears if he did and play the woman.

CHAPTER VI.

Ida. Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!

"Bravo! bravo! It's a prince's palace!"

"Oh! that I ever dared to see this day!"

The house of our destiny gone for ever.

Fritz. Well, but now to discover the delinquent:

The bairn is determined not to lose

This sum without a search. Werner.

On the evening appointed by Miss Venner had the desperate burglar and criminal whom she had the misfortune to own as her brother was at the spot she had indicated.

The weather had changed from the cold and frost mingled with snow which had characterized his last visit to the cave, and was now unusually mild and genial for the time of year. Rain had been falling, the ground was moist and damp, and a south-westerly wind was blowing.

Dingwall waited at the entrance to the cave, moodily lounging with his hands in his pockets. He would have smoked had he not been afraid of attracting attention, though there was little chance of any one passing by the lonely and deserted spot on the beach at that season of the year.

The waves made a melancholy music in his ears and recalled the rough and daring man to the days of his childhood, when, led by his mother's hand, he had wandered over the sands of the sea-shore, and listened to the same sound, while he gathered the beautiful weeds cast up by the waves.

Then he was innocent, now he was at war with society, and a reward was offered for his apprehension, on account of a crime he had committed a few weeks before.

As he looked at the gently undulating sea he wished that some ship would carry him far, far away to a distant land where he could forget the past and begin a new career.

But it was not to be. A deep sigh broke from him and dashed away a tear. All the recollections of the past swept over his soul like a flood and he felt himself a child.

It is in moments of solitude like this that the hardened are subject to the bitter influence of remorse, and it was a relief to the man when his sister's gentle footsteps were heard on the shingle.

"Are you there, Henry?" she said, in a low voice.

"Yes," he replied. "I have been this hour or more. Midnight has struck. You have kept me waiting a long while. Is anything wrong?"

"Nothing," she answered; "I only waited until all was quiet."

"I suppose you have had revelry and sports such as belong to Christmas," Dingwall grumbled. "I could have enjoyed myself too had I not come down here. Still I do not complain when business is to be done, and there is a large sum at stake."

"You are mistaken there," replied Miss Venner. "We had little company enough before the major discarded his son. Now we have less. He seems to grieve over it, and it is as much as Mrs. Burgoyne and I can do to prevent his forgiving him."

"Well," replied Dingwall, impatiently. "Don't keep me here all night talking. I am going to risk seven years' transportation and I want to get it over. Are the lights all out?"

"They are—except in the butler's pantry. Morgan, the butler, is tipsy."

"Thanks to your kind attentions, I suppose," said Dingwall, with a laugh.

"I have been looking after him. The key of the strong-room is in his pocket. He is fast asleep in his chair, with his feet before the fire. The strong-room opens out of the pantry. I shall admit you into the house, and all you have to do after that is to obtain the key, take possession of the family diamonds, which are in a silver casket, and make off with the plunder."

"Why are you doing this?" asked Dingwall, looking keenly at her in the dim light.

"That is my business. Did you ever know me do anything without an object?" she replied.

"I think not. You always had an eye to the main chance. Am I to give you anything if I get ever to Holland and sell the diamonds after breaking them up?"

"I want nothing," answered the governess. "I shall be well paid in the end. That is my secret."

A sudden suspicion crossed the man's mind as he said, slowly:

"I know, Daisy, that I have been a burden to you and the rest of my family and a thorn in your side for a good while. You may want to get rid of me,

and this is perhaps an attempt to get me locked up. If it is I swear that I will have my revenge on you."

"So you believe me capable of such a thing?" she asked, calmly.

"With your cool, calculating nature you are capable of anything."

"I give you my word in this instance that I do not mean you any harm," she replied, earnestly. "Kill me if you find that I am deceiving you. I shall not attempt to escape."

With another look of mistrust, which he could not conceal, the man said:

"I will trust you as far as I can see you, and no farther, Daisy. We are brother and sister, and ought to understand one another by this time. Show me the way. In half an hour the diamonds will be mine, or you will be dead."

Miss Venner shuddered at this menace, which she knew was no idle threat, for her brother's character was perhaps better known to her than it was to any one else; but she was not intimidated, because she really intended to deal fairly with him.

They ascended the winding path in the cliff, and reached the road leading to the Hall, which they traversed with cautious footsteps.

A side door was ajar, and pushing it open the governess, putting her finger on her lips to enjoin silence, beckoned Dingwall to follow her.

He did so; and after threading more than one devious corridor and descending some stairs, the governess pointed to a half-open door from which a light was visible.

"That's the room," she whispered. "Seize and gag Morgan the butler without him seeing you. I don't wish him to recognize you. In fact, all my plans will be spoiled if he sees your face."

"So will mine," exclaimed Dingwall, with a dry laugh.

"Cannot you blindfold him in some way? or, better still, you might take the key from his pocket without awakening him?"

"I'll try," replied Dingwall; "you need not teach me my business, my dear sister. I have served an apprenticeship to it, and there is not another man in the kingdom who would have done this job single-handed."

"How long will you be engaged?"

"About a quarter of an hour," said the burglar.

"Will you give a shrill whistle when you have finished?"

"Why? you will stay with me," he said, eying her again suspiciously.

"No. I have other work to attend to."

Dingwall seized Miss Venner's arm in a tight grip and pressed it until he hurt her dreadfully, but she did not cry out, though she winced under the pain.

"You shall not leave me," he hissed in her ear, "unless you tell me your motive."

"Very well, drag my secret from me if you will. I hate the son of the owner of this house."

"Frank Burgoyne?" exclaimed Dingwall.

"Yes. I have confounded his disgrace, and I wish to fix the suspicion of this robbery upon him."

"Bravo, my little sister," said the burglar; "you are a worthy member of our family. But where is Mr. Frank Burgoyne at this moment?"

"In the house, waiting for me under a pretext, which I have not time to explain to you; when I bear your whistle I shall know that you are making off with the diamonds, and then I shall send him into the butler's pantry and raise the house with a cry of 'thieves.'

"That's clever, and my mind is relieved," said Dingwall. "In a quarter of an hour expect to hear from me. You will not be far off?"

"No. I have made all my arrangements," said Miss Venner.

She tripped gently away, while the burglar cautiously entered the pantry in which the butler was unsuspectingly sleeping.

In a small room on the ground floor which opened upon the lawn, and was used as a school-room for the children, sat Frank Burgoyne. He had received a letter from Miss Venner, requesting him to come to the Hall at midnight that evening. This request had been sent to his club, in London, where he knew it would find him. The reason was given for asking him to visit her father's house like a thief in the night was Major Burgoyne's wish to see him alone, after his wife had retired to rest.

The window of the room indicated was left open and he was guided toward it by a light on a table. It was a relief to the watcher when Miss Venner's airy form appeared on the threshold.

Advancing, she shook him by the hand, saying:

"I have been working for you in your absence. You will believe that I am your friend now. The major is anxious to effect a reconciliation, but it is Mrs. Burgoyne who is your determined enemy."

"I know that too well," replied Frank. "Still I am pleased my father is coming to his senses. If

is an odd time for an interview, still I have to thank you for your kindness."

"The major is old and weak; he fears the constant reproaches and the temper of his wife," exclaimed Miss Venner; "you should make allowance for him."

"I will in future, though I do not see how my difference with Mrs. Burgoyne can be adjusted. However, I will settle that with my father, who I suppose will not be long before he makes his appearance."

"Have you my letter with you?" asked the governess, blushing in apparent confusion. "I fancy I added a paragraph which was of a warmer nature than a girl like myself ought to have written."

"What was it?" inquired Frank, producing the letter, which he carried in his pocket. "Oh! something about a true heart fondly beating. There is no harm in that."

He smiled good-humouredly; but she put out her hand and snatched the note from him, which she held over the light till it was totally consumed.

"You must not carry about with you a confession of my weakness," she murmured. "We poor little women are such strange creatures. We live in obedience to the dictates of our foolish hearts, and are despised for it."

"Nay," exclaimed the young man, quickly. "Pardon me, Miss Venner, I am the last to despise any one, and since you have given me such a proof of your goodwill as to arrange this meeting between my father and myself I shall always think of you as one of my best friends."

"Ah!" she answered, with a deep-drawn sigh, "if you only knew the wealth of feeling in my heart you would pity me."

Moved by an uncontrollable impulse she threw herself upon his breast and burst into a flood of bitter, blinding tears.

Astonished at this unexpected proceeding, he supported her with his right arm, while with his disengaged hand he smoothed her hair and tried to calm her.

"Miss Venner," he said. "My dear young lady, pray be quiet. This is embarrassing. What am I to do? What would people say and think if they saw us now?"

"No eye but that of heaven sees us," replied the governess, checking her sobs and staring wildly at him. "Oh, Frank, Frank, say you love me. Say that you will try to love me some time or other? I care not how far off the day may be. It will be something to hope for—something to live on. Only say this, Frank, and I will save you. There is yet time."

"Save me!" repeated Frank Burgoyne, thinking she had lost her senses. "From what? You do not know what you are talking about, my dear friend. You are a little excited and hysterical, I am afraid."

"Oh, he will not love me," answered the governess, in a despairing tone. "What shall I do? If I could only die, I should be happy. He runs on his fate. He sacrifices my love and his own honour and prospects, because he will not care for me. Am I ugly? Am I worse looking than other women? Oh, Frank, Frank, pity me!"

"Really, Miss Venner, this is very extraordinary," said Frank Burgoyne, disengaging her grasp and placing her gently, almost delicately, on a sofa. "It is improper for you to subject yourself to the only answer I can give you, which I am sorry to say is a refusal. My heart is not my own. I love another. Possibly were the case different I might be proud of the affection that you have shown for me. Forgive me for my bluntness, but it is best you should know the truth and that we should understand one another."

Miss Venner sprang into a sitting posture and stared wildly about her.

"Where am I?" she cried. "What has happened? I feel so ill. Have I been dreaming? Tell me if I have said anything strange?"

Thinking she might have had some temporary hallucination, Frank Burgoyne answered:

"I was afraid you were ill, and did not know what you were saying, which in part was only some nonsense I cannot remember. Are you well enough to summon the major and tell him I am awaiting his coming?"

"Yes," answered the governess, laconically.

She was hard and cold and stern again now—her face calm and impressive, as if she had not been agitated a few moments before to the very depths of her soul. Her eye was as steady and glistening as when she seemed to take a cruel pleasure in punishing the children whom it was her duty to correct as well as teach.

She rose and entered the passage.

As she did so a shrill whistle was heard in the distance.

"It is time," she muttered. "For the first part of the work is done."

After the lapse of a minute she returned, saying: "The major is with Morgan in his pantry, where the old butler is opening some wine—mean I presume for your entertainment. Will you go to him?"

"Certainly," answered Frank, who walked past her as she stopped on one side to make way for him.

He soon reached the pantry, as he knew every turn in the house, having been familiar with the rambling old building from his boyhood.

Gilding like a snake and scarcely allowing herself to breathe, the governess followed close upon his footsteps.

When he came to the pantry Frank pushed open the door, which wasajar.

The butler was lying on his face on the floor tightly bound and gagged. The door of the strong-room was open, and, suspecting in a moment that something was wrong, Frank with quick steps went into the strong-room where the diamonds were kept, and by the flickering light of the fire missed the casket from its accustomed place.

"Thieves have been at work here," he muttered. "I must alarm the house. It is all very odd, I cannot understand it."

Before he could emerge from the iron treasure-room the door was slammed to and the key being outside it was impossible to open it from within.

"The wind, I suppose. How confoundedly unlucky," said Frank to himself as he vainly tried to push and kick the door open. "What the deuce am I to do? Some one will come in the morning. How long can I live in this confined space? My discomfort, however, matters little, if the thief could only be caught. Fancy his escaping with such valuable booty. The Burgoyne Diamonds I am afraid are doomed. Help! help!" he added, frantically. "Let me out. Thieves! Help! Thieves!"

His voice sounded like a faint echo, and Miss Venner smiled as she heard his vain exclamations. She stooped over the butler as she passed him, and found that he was bleeding from a wound in the head which had caused insensibility, so that he could not recognize any one.

Hastily ascending the stairs, she proceeded to the major's bedroom, outside which Mrs. Burgoyne was standing with an anxious expression on her face.

"Well?" she said. "Is your mysterious plot complete?"

"It is. Mr. Frank Burgoyne with some accomplices are stealing the family diamonds. Raise an alarm and remember to declare that I have been with you all the evening, and that I could not possibly have gone downstairs."

"The diamonds! Are the diamonds in danger?" exclaimed Mrs. Burgoyne.

"I can't say. Perhaps if you rouse the house quickly you may prevent them from carrying off their plunder."

"Go to bed at once, dear, or rather stay in your room," said Mrs. Burgoyne. "I would not lose the diamonds for the world, but I suppose the police could recover them if they were taken away? I will wake the major and beat the gong in the hall to rouse every one."

Miss Venner retired to her room and sat down on the edge of the bed. She did not display any emotion, though her mind was in a tumult. Not a tear escaped her eyes, which were hot and dry.

In a short time footsteps were heard rushing wildly about the house. The great gong was loudly beaten, creating a dreadful clamour. The hoarse voices of men mingled with the shrieks of women.

All was uproar and confusion.

The burglary had been discovered!

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THERE is a proposal to make a gun of 70 tons—double the persuasive power of the Woolwich infant.

A FRENCH inventor proposes to photograph despatches to microscopic fineness, and blow them through a tube sunk in the Straits of Dover. When at their destination the despatches could be enlarged again.

CASABEJA.—Lieut. Conder's surveying party are now making an examination of the ruins of Casabaja. He reports that he has identified the great Temple there, and is making a survey of the town on the scale of 4 feet to the mile.

INTERFERENCE COLOURS OF GOLD.—W. Stein observes that gold in thin plates, or when precipitated from very dilute solutions (by action of sulphur dioxide in water), manifests dichroism, appearing indigo blue by transmitted light, but reddish yellow by reflected light. But if the particles of

gold be very small (as when gold is precipitated from its solution by means of stannous chloride) the laws of interference come into play and the gold appears purple. Such gold the author calls molecular gold, and he thus distinguishes three modifications of gold, (1) ordinary, (2) dichroitic, (3) molecular. Ruby glass he regards as a solution of molecular gold in glass.

ARTIFICIAL PARCHMENT.—A sheet of ordinary white blotting-paper, which will tear by its own weight when wetted, is converted into a material having all the properties of a tough parchment by merely dipping it for a few seconds in sulphuric acid. The Germans are using this artificial parchment for sausage-skins. It need hardly be said that it is slightly indigestible.

NAVY METAL BAND.—For use in collieries, suspension bridges, and for other purposes instead of wire rope, Messrs. Scott have recently patented a band composed of two or more layers of flat steel, charcoal iron, or other metal, of a suitable thickness and breadth. The layers are each made in one piece and are joined together by brazing, welding, or riveting.

COAL AT EPWORTH.—A thin seam of coal has been discovered at Epworth, the birthplace of John Wesley. The coal, which is of good quality, was met with about 60 yards from the surface. Boring for coal will shortly be commenced at South Scarsdale and Swinderby, Lincolnshire, by Mr. Boot, mining engineer, under whose superintendence the Clifton coalfields were discovered.

EFFECT OF COAL GAS ON TREES.—From some experiments made in Berlin with the view of determining what damage is really done to the roots of trees and shrubs by coal-gas escaping from pipes and permeating the soil, it has been found that even so small a quantity of gas as 25 cubic feet per day, distributed through 576 cubic feet of earth, rapidly killed the rootlets of all trees with which it came in contact.

THE FUNCTION OF GUMS IN PLANTS.—From experiments made with pyrogallic acid Struvé concludes that gums perform a function in plants analogous to that of the blood in animals. Pyrogallic acid in contact with alkalies oxidizes rapidly, becoming of a dark-brown colour; with other substances, such as gum arabic and blood, the oxidation is slow, a yellow colour is produced, and long, needle-like crystals form, which are insoluble in water. The least trace of this yellow substance produces an intense blue with ammonia or the other caustic alkalies. The exact composition of this curious substance has not yet been ascertained.

NAVY MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.—If into a glass tube two flames of convenient size be introduced, at a distance of one third the length of the pipe, counting from its base, these flames will vibrate in unison. The phenomenon continues as long as the flames remain separate, but the sound ceases the moment they are brought in contact. If the position of the flames in the tube be varied, it will be found that the sound decreases until one half the entire length is approached. Based on these facts, M. Kastner has constructed a new musical instrument of a very peculiar timbre, closely resembling that of the human voice. The "pyrophone," as it is termed, has three key boards, each key of which is, by simple mechanism, placed in communication with the conduit pipes of the flames in the glass tubes. By pressing upon the keys the flames separate and sound is produced. When the pressure is removed it is instantly stilled by the junction of the flames.

FRENCH EXPERIMENTS.—Mention is made of some successful experiments by M. Chauveau, in separating, in a pustule of vaccine, a serous matter and molecular granulations, in order to inoculate with each, separately and comparatively. He has found that the vaccine serum is not virulent, and that the activity of the virus resides in the solid granulations. On the addition of water the granulations deposit themselves, and, so long as the mixture is in repose, the water is unaffected. If, however, the liquid is agitated, the granulations expand and communicate the virulent property to the whole. It has been determined that vaccine thus weakened with fifty times its weight of water is as certain in its action as if in concentrated form. M. Chauveau therefore concludes that, in the pus of the variola and of the morbid affection, as well as in the vaccine liquid, the specific activity which constitutes virulence resides exclusively in the elementary corpuscles held in suspension by the humours.

THE ABUSE OF CHLORAL.—This very valuable medicine, it appears, is being grossly abused by the public. Chloral is a most valuable medicine in the hands of a judicious doctor, but is also a most dangerous plaything or luxury in the hands of people who merely wish to escape from the sleeplessness of anxiety or of fashionable ennui.



DAISY THORNTON.

CHAPTER VII.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret.
Oh, death in life! the days that are no more.

Tennyson.

DAISY's letter was dated at Rouen, France, and can as follows:

"May 15th, 18—

"DEAR, DEAR GUY,—I am all alone here in Rouen, not a person near me who speaks English or knows a thing of Daisy Thornton, as she was, or as she is now, for I am Daisy Thornton here. I have taken the old name again and am an English governess in a wealthy French family; and this is how it came about:

"I have left Berlin and the party there, and am earning my own living, for three reasons, two of which concern Cousin Tom and one of which has to do with you and that miserable settlement which has troubled me so much. I thought when I brought it back and tore it up that was the last of it, and did not know that by no act of mine could I give it to you until I was of age.

"Father missed it, of course, and I told him just the truth and that I could never touch a penny of your money, and I not your wife.

"He did not say a word, and I supposed it was all right, and never dreamed that I was actually clothed and fed on the interest of that money. Father would not tell me and you did not write. Why didn't you write, Guy? I expected a letter so long and went to the office so many times, and cried a little to myself and said Guy has forgotten me.

"Then we went to New Zealand, father, mother and I—went to live with Tom. He wanted me before you did, you know, but I could not marry Tom. He is very rich now, and we lived with him, and then we all came back, and have travelled everywhere since, and I have had teachers in everything, and people say I am a fine scholar, and praise me much; and, Guy, I have tried to improve just to please you, believe me, Guy, just to please you.

"Tom was as a brother—a dear, good, big bear of a brother—I am I loved as such but nothing more.

"Even when I read I could not marry Tom after knowing you, and told him so when in Berlin he asked me for the sixth time to be his wife. I had to tell him something hard to make him understand, and when I saw how what I said hurt him cruelly and made him cry because he was such a great, big,

[DEATHS AND MARRIAGES.]

awkward, dear old fellow, I put my arms around his neck and cried with him, and tried to explain, and that made him ten times worse. Oh, if folks only would not love me so it would save me so much sorrow.

"You see I tell you this because I want you to know exactly what I have been doing these five years, and that I have never thought of marrying Tom or anybody. I did not think I could. I felt that if I belonged to anybody it was you, and I cannot have Tom, and father was very angry and taunted me with living on Tom's money, which I did not know before, and he accidentally let out about the marriage settlement, and that hurt me worse than the other.

"Oh, Guy, how can I give it up? Surely there must be a way now I am of age.

"I was so humiliated about it, and after all that passed between father and Tom and me I could not stay in Berlin and never be sure whose money was paying for my bread, and when I heard that Madame Laforecade, a French lady who had spent the winter in Berlin, was wanting an English governess for her children, I went to her, and as the result am here at this beautiful country-seat, just out of the city, earning my own living and feeling so proud to do it; only, Guy, there is an ache in my heart, a heavy, throbbing pain which will not leave me day or night, and this is how it came there.

"Mother wrote that you were about to marry Miss Hamilton. Letters from home brought her news, which she thinks is true.

"Oh, Guy, it is not, it cannot be true.

"You must not go quite away from me now, just as I am coming back to you, for Guy, I am—or rather, I have come, and a great love, such as I never felt before, fills me full almost to bursting. I always liked you, Guy; but when we were married I did not know what it was to love—to feel my pulses quicken as they do now just at the thought of you.

"If I had how happy I could have made you, but I was a silly little girl, and married life was distasteful to me, and I was willing to be free, though always, deep down in my heart, was something which protested against it, and if you knew just how I was influenced and led on insensibly to accept you would not blame me so much.

"The word divorce had an ugly sound to me, and I did not like it, and I have always felt as if it would bring you just the same.

"It would not be right for me to marry Tom, even if I wanted to, which I do not.

"I am yours, Guy—only yours, and all these

years I have studied and improved for your sake, without any fixed idea perhaps as to what I expected or hoped.

"But when Tom spoke the last time it came to me suddenly what I was keeping myself for, and, just as a great body of water when freed from its prison walls rolls rapidly down a green meadow, so did a mighty love for you take possession of me and permeate my whole being, until every nerve quivered with joy, and when Tom was gone I went away alone and cried more for my new happiness, I am afraid, than for him, poor fellow.

"And yet I pitied him too, and as I could not stay in Berlin after that I came away to earn money enough to take me back to you. For I am coming or I was before I heard that dreadful news which I cannot believe.

"Is it true, Guy? Write and tell me it is not, and that you love me still and want me back, or, if it is part true, and you are engaged to Julia, show her this letter and ask her to give you up, even if it is the very day before the wedding—for you are mine, and, sometimes, when the children are troublesome, and I am so tired and sorry and homesick, I have such a longing for a sight of your dear face, and think if I could only lay my aching head in your lap once more I should never know pain or weariness again.

"Try me, Guy. I will be so good and loving and make you so happy, and your sister too—I was a bother to her once. I'll be a comfort now. Tell her so, please; tell her to bid me come. Say the word yourself, and almost before you know it I'll be there.

"Truly, lovingly, waitingly, your wife,
DAISY.

"P.S.—To make sure of this letter's safety I shall send it by a friend, who will post it to you.

"Again, lovingly, DAISY THORNTON." This was Daisy's letter which Guy read with such a pang in his heart as he had never known before, even when he was smarting the worst from wounded love and disappointed hopes. Then he said to himself:

"I can never suffer again as I am suffering now." And now, alas, he felt how little he knew of that pain which rends the heart and takes the breath away.

"Heaven help her," he moaned—his first thought, his first prayer for Daisy, the girl who called herself his wife, when just across the hall, only a few rods away, was the bride of a few hours—another woman who bore his name and called him her husband.

With a face as pale as ashes and hands which shook like palsied hands, he read again that pathetic

cry from her whom he now felt he had never ceased to love; ay, whom he loved still, and whom, if he could, he would have taken to his arms so gladly and loved and cherished as the priceless thing he had once thought her to be.

The first moments of agony which followed the reading of the letter were Daisy's wholly, and in bitterness of soul the man she had cast off and thought to take again cried out, as he stretched his arms towards an invisible form:

"Too late, darling; too late. But had it come two months, one month, or even one week ago, I would—I would—have gone to you over land and sea, but now—another is in your place, another is my wife; Julia—poor, innocent Julia, Heaven help me to keep my vow; Heaven help me in my need."

He was praying now; Julia was the burden of his prayer.

And as he prayed there came into his heart an utterable tenderness and pity for her. He had thought he loved her an hour ago; he believed he loved her now, or if he did not he would be the kindest, most thoughtful of husbands, and never let her know, by word or sign, of the terrible pain he should always carry in his heart.

"Darling Daisy! poor Julia," was what to himself he designated the two women who were both so much to him.

To the first his love, to the other his tender care, for she was worthy of it.

She was noble, and good, and womanly; he said it many times, and tried to stop the rapid heart throbs and quiet himself down to meet her when she should come to him with her frank, open face and smile, in which there was no shadow of guile.

She was coming now; he heard her voice in the hall speaking to his friend, and thrusting the fatal letter in his pocket he rose to his feet, and steady him upon the table stood waiting for her, as flushed and eager she came in.

"Guy, Guy, what is it? Are you ill?" she asked, alarmed at the pallor on his face and the strange expression of his eyes.

He was glad she had thus construed his agitation, and he answered that he was faint and a little ill.

"It came on suddenly while I was sitting here. It will pass off as suddenly," he said, trying to smile, and holding out his hand, which she took at once in hers.

"Is it your heart, Guy? Do you think it is your heart?" she continued, as she rubbed and caressed his cold, clammy hand.

A shadow of pain or remorse flitted across Guy's face as he replied:

"I think it is my heart, but I assure you there is no danger—the worst is over. I am a great deal better."

And he was better with that fair girl beside him, her face glowing with excitement and her soft hands pressing his.

Perfectly healthy herself, she must have imparted some life and vigour to him, for he felt his pulse grow steadier beneath her touch and the blood flow more easily through his veins.

If only he could forget that crumpled letter which lay in his vest pocket, and seemed to burn into his flesh—forget that, and the young girl across the sea, watching for an answer and the one word "Come"—he might be happy yet, for Julia was one whom any man could love and be proud to call his wife. And Guy said to himself that he did love her, though not as he once loved Daisy, or as he could love her again were he free to do so; and because of that full love withheld he made a mental vow that his whole life should be given to her happiness, so that she might never know any care or sorrow from which he could shield her.

"And Daisy?" something whispered in his ear.

"I must and will forget her," he sternly answered, and the arm he had thrown around Julia, who was sitting with him upon the sofa, tightened its grasp until she winced and moved a little from him.

He was very talkative that evening, and asked his wife many questions about her friends, and the shopping she wished to do, and the places they were to visit; and Julia, who had hitherto regarded him as a great, silent man, given to few words, wondered at the change, and watched the bright red spots on his cheeks, and thought how she would manage to have medical advice for that dreadful heart disease, which had come like a nightmare to haunt her bridal days.

Next morning there came a paper containing a notice of the marriage, and this Guy sent to Daisy, with only a faint tracing of a pencil to indicate the paragraph.

"Better so than to write," he thought, though he longed to add the words, "Forgive me, Daisy; your letter came too late."

And so the paper was sent, and, after a week or

two, Guy went back to his home, and the blue rooms which Julia had fitted up for Daisy five years before became her own by right.

And Fanny Thornton welcomed her warmly to the house, and by many little acts of thoughtfulness showed how glad she was to have her there.

And Julia was very happy save when she remembered the heart disease, which she was sure Guy had, and for which he would not seek advice. "There was nothing the matter with his heart unless it were too full of love," he told her, laughingly, and wondered to himself if in saying this to her he was guilty of a falsehood, inasmuch as his words misled her so completely.

After a time, however, there came a change, and thoughts of Daisy ceased to disturb him as they once had done. No one ever mentioned her to him, and since the receipt of her letter he had heard no tidings of her until six months after his marriage, when there came to him the thousand, with all the interest which had accrued since the settlement first was made. There was no word from Daisy herself, but a letter from a lawyer in Berlin, who said all there was to say with regard to the business, but did not tell where Miss McDonald, as he called her, was.

Then Guy wrote to Daisy a letter of thanks, to which there came no reply, and as time went on the old wound began to heal and the grave took its repose; and when, at last, one year after his marriage, they brought him a beautiful little baby girl and laid it in his arms, and then a few moments later let him into the room where the pale mother lay, he stooped over her and kissing her fondly said:

"I never loved you half as well as I do now!"

It was a pretty child, with dark blue eyes, and hair in which there was a gleam of gold, and Guy, when asked what he would call her, said:

"Would you object to Margaret?"

Julia knew what he meant, and, like the true, noble woman she was, offered no objection to his choice, knowing well who Margaret had been; and herself first gave the pet name of Daisy to her child, on whom Guy settled the thousand pounds sent to him by the Daisy over the sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

Hope tells a flattering tale,
Delusive, vain and hollow,
Ah, let not hope prevail,
Lest disappointment follow.

Mrs. Wrother.

WATCHING, waiting, hoping, saying to herself in the morning "It will come before night," and saying to herself at night "It will be hers to-morrow morning," such was Daisy's life, even before she had a right to expect an answer to her letter.

Of the nature of Guy's reply she had no doubt. He had loved her once, he loved her still, and he would take her back of course.

There was no truth in that rumour of another marriage.

Possibly her father, whom she understood now better than she once had, had got the story up for the sake of inducing her through pique to marry Tom; but, if so, his plan would fail.

Guy would write to her "Obine?" and she would go, and more than once she counted the contents of her purse and added to it the sum due to her from Madame Lafosse, and would say if she would dare venture on the journey with so small a sum.

"You so happy and white too, co'mme," her little pupil, Pauline, said to her one day when they sat together in the garden, and Daisy was indulging in a fanciful picture of her meeting with Guy.

"Yes, I am happy," Daisy said, rousing from her reverie; "but I did not know I was pale or white, as you term it, though, now I think of it, I do feel ill and faint. It's the heat, I think. Oh! there's Max with the evening mail; he is coming this way! He has—he certainly has something for me!"

Daisy's cheeks were scarlet now, and her eyes were bright as stars as she went forward to meet the man who brought the letters to the house.

"Only a paper!—is there nothing more?" she asked, in an unsteady voice, as she took the paper in her hand, and, recognizing Guy's handwriting, knew almost to a certainty what was before her.

"Oh, ciel! vous êtes malade! J'apporterai un verre d'eau!" Pauline exclaimed, forgetting her English and adopting her mother tongue in her alarm at Daisy's white face and the peculiar tone of her voice.

"No, Pauline, stay; open the paper for me," Daisy said, feeling that it would be easier so than to read it herself, for she knew it was there, else he would never have sent her a paper and nothing more.

Delighted to be of some use, and a little gratified to open a foreign paper, Pauline tore off the wrapper, starting a little at Daisy's quick, sharp cry as she made a rent across the handwriting.

"Look, you are tearing into my name which I wrote," Daisy said, and then remembering herself sank back into her seat in the garden chair, while Pauline wondered what harm there was in tearing at old soiled wrapper, and why her governess should take it so carefully in her hand and roll it up as if it had been a living thing.

There were notices of new books, and a runaway match in high life, and a suicide, and a golden wedding, and the latest fashions from Paris, into which Pauline plunged with avidity, while Daisy listened like one in a dream, asking, when the fashions were exhausted:

"Is that all? Are there no deaths or marriages?"

Pauline had not thought of that—she would see; and she hunted through the columns till she found Guy's pencil mark, and read:

"Married, this morning, in —— church, by the Rev. Dr. ——, assisted by the rector, Guy Thornton, Esq., to Miss Julia Hamilton."

"Yes, yes; it's very hot here, isn't it? I think I will go in," Daisy said, her fingers working nervously with the bit of paper she held.

But Pauline was too intent on the name Thornton to hear what Daisy said, and she asked:

"Is Mr. Thornton your friend?"

It was natural enough questions, and Daisy roused herself to answer it with a smile:

"He is the son of my husband's father."

"Oh, out!" Pauline rejoined, a little mystified as to the exact relationship existing between Guy Thornton and her teacher's husband, who she supposed was dead, as Daisy had only confided to me the fact of a divorce.

"What date is the name?" Daisy asked, and on being told she said softly to herself "Never; it was too late."

There was in her mind no doubt as to what the result would have been had her letter been in time; no doubt of Guy's predilection for her; no regret that she had written to him, except that the knowledge that she loved him at last might make him unhappy with thinking "what might have been," and with the bitter pain which cut her heart like a knife there was mingled a pity for Guy, who would perhaps suffer more than she did, if that were possible. She never once thought of retribution, or of murmuring against her fate, but accepted it meekly; albeit she staggered under her load and grew faint as she thought of the lonely life before her, and she so young.

Slowly she went back to her room, while Pauline walked up and down the garden, trying to make out the relationship between the newly married Thornton and her teacher.

"The son of her husband's father?" she repeated, until at last a meaning dawned upon her, and she said: "Then he must be her brother-in-law; but why didn't she say so? Maybe, though, that is the English way of putting it;" and having thus settled the matter Pauline joined her mother, who was asking for Mrs. Thornton.

"Gone to her room, and her brother-in-law is married. It was marked in a paper and I read it to her, and who's fit," Pauline said, without, however, in the least connecting the illness with the marriage.

Daisy did not come down to dinner that night, and the maid who called her the next morning reported her as ill and acting very strangely.

Through the summer a malignant fever had prevailed to some extent in and about Berlin, and the physician whom Madame Lafosse summoned to the invalid expressed a fear that she had been taken with it; and ordered her to be kept as quiet as possible.

"She seems to have something weighing on her mind. Has she heard any bad news from home?" he asked, as in reply to his question where her pain was the worst, Daisy always answered:

"It reached him too late—too late, and I am so sorry."

Madame knew of no bad news; she said, and then as she saw the foreign paper lying on the table she took it up, and, guided by the pencil marks, read the notice of Guy Thornton's marriage, and that gave her the key at once to Daisy's mental agitation. Daisy had been frank with her and told her as much of her story as was necessary, and she knew that the Guy Thornton married to Julia Hamilton had once called Daisy his wife.

"Excuse me, she has something on her mind, I suspect," she said to the physician, who was still holding Daisy's hand and looking anxiously at her flushed cheeks and bright, restless eyes.

"I thought so," he rejoined, "and it aggravates all the symptoms of her fever. I shall call again to-night."

He did call and found his patient worse, and the next day he asked of Madame Lafosse:

"Has she friends in this country? If so they ought to know."

A few hours later and in his lodgings at Berlin Tom read the following despatch:

"Mrs. Thoroton is dangerously ill. Come at once."

It was directed to Mr. McDonald, who with his wife had been on a trip to Russia, and was expected daily.

Feeling intuitively that it concerned Daisy, Tom had opened it and without a moment's hesitation packed his valise and leaving a note for the Mallow-side when they should return, started for Rouen.

Daisy did not know him, and in her delirium she said things to him and of him which hurt him cruelly. Guy was her theme and the letter which went "too late, too late."

Then she would beg of Tom to go for Guy, to bring him to her, and tell him how much she loved him and how good she would be if he would take her back.

"Father wants me to marry Tom," she said, in a whisper, and Tom's heart almost stood still as he listened; "and Tom wanted me too, but I couldn't, you know, even if he were worth his weight in gold. I could not love him. Why, he's got red hair, and such great freckles on his face, and big feet and hands with freckles on them. Do you know Tom?"

"Yes, I know him," Tom answered, sadly, forcing down a choking sob, while the big hand with the great freckles on it smoothed the golden hair tenderly and pushed it back from the burning brow.

"Don't talk any more, Daisy; it tires you so," he said, as he saw her about to speak again.

But Daisy was not to be stopped, and she went on: "Tom is good, though—so good, but awkward, and I like him ever so much, but I can't be his wife. I cannot, I cannot."

"He don't expect it now, or want it," came huskily from Tom, while Daisy quickly asked:

"Don't he?"

"No, never any more; so put it from your mind and try to sleep." Tom said, and again the freckled hands smoothed the tumbled pillows and wiped the big drops from Daisy's face, while all the time the great, kind heart was breaking, and the hot tears were rolling down the sunburnt face. Daisy thought so ugly.

Tom had heard from Madame Laforcade of Guy's marriage, and, like her, understood why Daisy's fever ran so high and her mind was in such a turmoil.

But for himself he knew there was no hope, and with a feeling of death in his heart he watched by her day and night, yielding his place to no one, and saying to Madame when she remonstrated with him and bade him take care for his own health:

"It does not matter for me. I would rather die than not."

Daisy was better when her mother came—sawed, the doctor said, more by Tom's care and nursing than by his own skill, and then Tom gave up his post and never went near her unless she asked for him.

"She cannot bear my looks, and I will not force myself upon her," he said; and so he stayed away, but surrounded her with every luxury money could buy, and as soon as she was able had her removed to a pretty little cottage which he rented and fitted up for her, and where she would be more at home and quieter than at Madame Laforcade's.

And there one morning when he called to inquire for her he too was smitten down with the fever, which he had taken with Daisy's breath the many nights and days he watched by her without rest or sufficient food.

There was a faint, followed by a long interval of unconsciousness, and when he came to himself he was in Daisy's own room, lying on Daisy's little bed, and Daisy herself was bending anxiously over him with a flush on her white cheeks and a soft, pitiful look in her blue eyes.

"What is it? Where am I?" he asked, and Daisy replied:

"You are here in my room—on my bed; and you've got the fever, and I'm going to take care of you, and I'm so glad. Not glad you have the fever," she added, as she met his look of wonder, "but glad I can repay in part all you did for me, you dear, noble Tom! And you are not to talk," and she laid her small hand on his mouth as she saw him about to speak. "I am strong enough; the doctor says so, and I'd do it if he didn't, for you are the best, the truest friend I have."

(To be continued.)

THE COURT OF CHANCERY.—Arrangements have been made for hearing causes and matters depending at the Rolls (until the completion of Lord Romilly's resignation) by the Lord

Chancellor, and the formal steps for vacating his lordship's office will, for a few weeks, be deferred, at the request of Government, with a view to the convenience of public business. The Court of Chancery, therefore, at present reveals the extraordinary position of the Court of Appeal being split up and in effect temporarily annihilated. Lord Justice James is sitting for Vice Chancellor Wickens; and the Lord Chancellor is to sit for the Master of the Rolls. What will happen if appeals be carried from either of these courts? Obviously Lord Justice James and Lord Justice Mellish could not hear appeals from the Lord Chancellor sitting as Master of the Rolls, and there is something anomalous in the Lord Chancellor and Lord Justice Mellish adjudicating upon appeals from the decisions of their brother appellate judge sitting as a judge of first instance. The present state of things shows in a remarkable manner the great inconveniences which may result from courts being presided over by a single judge. The difficulty in which, for some inscrutable reason, the Court of Chancery is placed could not arise in the court projected by Lord Selborne's Bill, and this is one more reason why that Bill should be sent with all possible speed to the House of Commons.

LITTLE SUNSHINE.

CHAPTER XI.

ERNEST HARTLEY began to fear that he had made a grave mistake. "Surely," he thought, "this innocence cannot be stimulated. She must be innocent. She could not be so great a hypocrite."

Then, taking from his pocket the letter which he had received, he handed it to Lily, and continued aloud:

"Is not this your handwriting? Did you not write this letter?"

She took the letter and read it carefully through from beginning to end, and then she said, while her eyes flashed proudly:

"You insult me, sir, by asking the question, but I will answer it notwithstanding. This is not my handwriting, though a near counterfeit of it. I did not write this letter and never saw it before, and never, from the moment that I promised to become your wife, have I wavered in my love for you. I have loved you as only a true woman can love—loved you with all my heart—idolized you, in fact; I will go farther, and say that I still love you blindly, devotedly. And now that I have given you this assurance, go, and leave me to myself; and if you have any touch of pity in your heart, never come near me again. Henceforth, wherever I may go I shall carry the recollection of you with me; and, loitering as I do, this will be punishment enough, but to look upon you in agony unbearable, since your presence is like a living voice, which whispers in my ear the fact that you never loved me!" And, carried away by her emotions, Lily Davis gave way to an agony of tears.

The girl's earnestness touched Hartley to the quick.

He felt that every word which she had uttered was truthful, and he felt deeply humiliated as well as greatly pained to think that he had judged her harshly and without giving her the opportunity to defend herself.

He would willingly have given his life if by so doing he could have concealed the past.

As it was he could only stand abashed and trembling before the deeply injured girl, whose deep sobbing seemed to pierce his heart like a knife.

At length he ventured to say as he approached Lily Davis and laid his hand gently upon her shoulder:

"I feel that you have spoken truly, Lily, and that you have been made the victim of some vile plot, the perpetrators of which I shall do my best to discover and punish. In the meantime can you ever forgive me for the injurious and unmanly course which I have pursued? But I will not ask it. It is not reasonable to suppose that you could easily forget the deep wrong which I have done you. Do not, however, I beseech you, cherish the doubt which you have just expressed that I never loved you. Oh, Lily, it was my deep, almost insatiate love for you which made me forget myself. I believe I have been more than half demented for the few past weeks, but the scales have fallen from my eyes now. I see my error and bitterly do I regret it. Would that I could by a life-long penance recall the past, but since that is impossible I must bear the burden of my fault and for ever relinquish the heaven to which I was once so near. Farewell, Lily, and may you be happier in the future than ever I, in my headstrong passion, could have made you. But, oh, my darling! my life, my love, my own Sunshine, before I go say that you will try to forgive me!"

And throwing himself into a chair the young man

covered his face with his hands and shook with emotion.

It was long before Lily could command herself sufficiently to speak, but at length her violent sobbing ceased, and, approaching Ernest Hartley, she said, in a tone of the deepest pathos, as she laid her hand on his bowed head:

"Oh, Ernest, how could you think so badly of me? How could you believe that I who loved you so much could be the dreadful creature which that forged letter pictures me? How could you, Ernest? Oh, how could you?"

"Spare me, Lily!" groaned the youth, in a tone of agony; "oh, spare me! Every word which you utter penetrates my heart like a stiletto! I acknowledge my fault, and on my knees I beg your forgiveness, but if you cannot extend that blessed boon I will depart without it and accept my fate. Farewell, my darling, my only love! May Heaven shower blessings upon and protect you always!"

And springing to his feet Ernest Hartley rushed toward the door as though fearing to trust himself longer in her presence.

"Stay, Ernest!" cried Lily, as the young man laid his hand upon the door-handle.

He turned to look at her, and she stood with outstretched arms and tear-suffused eyes beaming all the great love which filled her noble, generous heart.

"Do not leave me, Ernest," she continued; "all is forgiven—all forgotten! You were not yourself when you doubted me, but now you are, my Ernest—my own Ernest!"

"My darling!" he ejaculated, as he sprang toward her and caught her in a close embrace; "my own Little Sunshine!"

For some moments they stood thus, heart beating against heart, and their souls mingling in sweet communion.

Then Lily gently released herself, and while the light of love suffused her face she said:

"And now, Ernest, let the past be as though it had never been. Let us never allude to the hateful subject again, but live only in the present and hope for joy in the future."

"With all my heart, darling," he replied. "Heaven knows I have no desire to recall the past, for to me it will always be the one bitter, black epoch of my life. But we cannot ignore it entirely, my love, for justice demands that I should ferret out the authors of the plot against you and punish them as they deserve."

"It is my earnest request that you will pursue the subject no farther," said Lily, with decision; "the affair is hateful to me and I have no desire for revenge. Leave my enemies to Heaven. Their own consciences will make them miserable enough. Promise me that you will leave this matter exactly where it is."

"Well then I will if you so greatly desire it," retorted Hartley, in a tone of disappointment; "but it is hard to think that such rascals should go unwhipped of justice."

"They will not go unpunished," replied Lily, "for Heaven's judgments are sure, and retribution sooner or later is certain."

Before Hartley could respond to Lily's last remark there was a knock at the door, which the girl opened, and then instantly started back with a scream of alarm and stood as though petrified with horror, gazing at the individual who presented himself.

At the same instant Hartley looked up and at once recognized in the person who stood nonchalantly looking in upon them the man who had attempted to steal his watch but a few hours before.

It was but the work of a moment for Hartley to seize the fellow by the throat, exclaiming as he did so:

"You showed me a clean pair of heels awhile ago, my man, but you are my prisoner now, or you are stronger than I take you to be."

"Hush!" continued the man, with the utmost coolness: "Don't speak so loud, or somebody might hear you."

"Somebody will hear me, if I mistake not," replied Hartley, as he tightened his grip, and then raising his voice he cried out, lustily: "Police! Help! Help!"

"Take your fingers from my throat and stop your yelping, or I may do you a harm!" exclaimed the man, while a dangerous light gleamed in his eyes, and then by a sudden wrench he broke Hartley's hold, pushed him into the room, and, following, closed and locked the door.

While this scene was going forward Lily Davis stood with dilated eyes and face as white as chalk, deprived of the power of speech; nor did she come to herself till the new comer turned toward her said, sharply:

"Well, girl, is it your desire that I should be arrested? If not call off your dog and send him to his kennel."

"For Heaven's sake do not molest that man, Ernest!" she exclaimed, in a frightened tone, as her lover was again about to seize the intruder. "Do not touch him, but go and leave us together."

Ernest Hartley was thunder-struck, and could not conceal the surprise which took possession of him as he listened to Lily's strange request.

"But the man is a thief, Lily!" he exclaimed; "it is but a little while ago since he attempted to steal my watch in the crowded street—he is a dangerous thief, and do you wish to be left alone with such a character?"

"I do," replied Lily, huskily; "he will not hurt me. Go, for mercy's sake, go! and ask no questions!"

"But I hear footsteps upon the stairs," rejoined Hartley; "doubtless some policeman has heard my cry and answered it. If this should be the case what shall I say?"

"Say that the trouble is ended—that you have no need of his services—anything to prevent him from coming in. Go, go, I beseech you!"

"Yes, go!" said the intruder, with a grim smile; "and another time be sure of your game before you attempt to make an arrest. You needn't be afraid to leave the girl in my care. She has told you that I will not hurt her, and she is right. It is not my game to do her harm, for she is too useful to me. We understand each other perfectly, don't we, my dear?"

And he smiled grimly at Lily.

She did not reply to him, but with a look of shame again requested her lover to leave the room at once and quiet matters outside.

Thus adjured Ernest Hartley departed, and when Lily and the intruder were alone the latter said as he coolly seated himself:

"Well, Lily, you didn't expect to see me again, did you?"

"I did not," replied the girl, trembling as she spoke.

"You thought I was dead, didn't you?" said the man, "and you hoped I was too, didn't you? Come, be candid. Tell the truth. I shan't think any the less of you. I admire candour. I was always very candid myself, wasn't I now?"

"I did think you were dead," replied the girl, with a shudder, "because it is so long since I heard either from or of you, but I did not wish it. Whenever I have thought of you I have wished that you might be living and a better man, but that wish I see was vain. You have gone from bad to worse, and I fear there is no hope for you."

"Oh, don't say that, Lily! Don't say that," returned the man, in a tone of mock contrition. "You know what the old hymn says:

While the lamp holds out to burn

The vilest sinner may return.

I might live to be a church deacon yet—or perhaps even a parson—who knows? You shouldn't try to discourage a fellow like that. By the way," he continued, as he suddenly altered his tone, and fixed a penetrating gaze on the girl, "what young fellow is that who has just left us?"

"He is a friend," replied Lily, blushing deeply as she spoke.

"Good enough," ejaculated the man with a grimace. "I'm glad he is a friend, because he won't be apt to give me any farther trouble. Especially if he is a very dear friend, which I am more than half inclined to believe he is. I tried to steal his watch awhile ago, and I was just thinking how awkward it would have been if he had succeeded in getting me arrested. He would have been obliged to compound a felony in order to get me liberated, wouldn't he? And that wouldn't have been agreeable either to him or you, would it?"

"Oh, why have you come here to torture me?" exclaimed Lily Davis, in a tone of agony. "Was it not enough that you left me alone to fight the battle of life, subjected to the taunts of the heartless, and exposed to all the dangers of a great city? Was it not enough that you cast me off in my tender years to win my bread as best I might? Could you not be content to stay away from me now that I am of an age to take care of myself, and not seek me out to degrade and curse me with your presence?"

"Well, well, well! What next I wonder!" exclaimed the man, with well-affected indignation. "If you ain't the most heartless little piece of femininity that I ever saw then I'm a Dutchman! Here I've been away from you for five years, knocking about the world trying to pick up an honest living, and when I come to see you, instead of rushing into my arms and covering me with kisses, you treat me as if I were a beggar, and want to know what I sought you out for! Is this the way a dutiful daughter ought to greet a long-absent father? Is this the return I ought to get for all the affection I have lavished upon you? Lily, I'm ashamed of you! Absolutely ashamed of you! Oh, now I have learned,

like King Lear, 'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!'" And with mock-sorrow the man put his handkerchief to his eyes and affected to weep.

"You have never acted like a father to me!" exclaimed Lily, indignantly, "nor have I ever felt for you a daughter's affection. I never knew anything but degradation, suffering and privation while you were with me, and although you left me exposed to every peril and without a friend in the world I felt a sweet relief when you were gone, and could have laughed for joy amid all my misery and squalor. And now your reappearance fills me with horror and disgust. I wish you no harm. I should rejoice to know that you had altered your life, and were trying to do right, but I neither love nor respect you, and never can."

"Oh, that's the way you feel, is it?" sneered the man, whose dark eyes snapped viciously. "Then I must take some strong measures to bring you to a sense of your duty!" As he spoke he locked the door, placed the key in his pocket, and, approaching Lily, continued: "For five long years I have been a fugitive and a vagabond on the face of the earth—a sort of Ishmael whose hand has been against every man as every man's hand has been against me. Many a time the bloodhounds of the law have been on my track, and sometimes I have suffered imprisonment. Now, mark me, girl, I do not intend to mend my ways. I am none of your canting, whining hypocrites—I intend to live as I have ever lived, independent of all law, but hereafter I intend to live in security, and I intend that you shall aid me in doing so."

"Never! Never!" exclaimed Lily Davis, firmly.

"Softly! Softly! Not so fast, little girl!" exclaimed Luke Davis (for that was the man's name). "I have a way to exact obedience when it is not given willingly. Look at me!" And as he spoke he pulled from his pocket a revolver and cocked it. "I do not hold my life at a pin's value," he continued, "and I value yours as little as my own. The youth who left here but a short time since loves you. I could see it in his every look. And you love him. The probability is that you are engaged, but you will never be married unless you do my bidding. Swear that whatever happens you will be my friend—that whatever crime I may commit, coming to your knowledge, you will not divulge it—and that if I fly here for refuge when pursued by the hounds of the law you will conceal me. Swear this, or neither you nor myself shall ever leave this room alive! Swear!" And he placed the cold muzzle of the pistol against her throbbing temple.

The trembling girl looked up at him with a world of agony and terror in her blue eyes. She knew the desperate character of the man who had her in his power. She saw that he was in dead earnest. She felt that he would keep his word. Life was very dear to her now since she had become reconciled to her lover. She could not bear the idea that they should be thus rudely separated for ever, and in her mortal terror she almost involuntarily exclaimed:

"I swear!"

"That is good enough so far as it goes!" returned Luke Davis, "but I fear the oath is not binding enough. I know what idiots you believers in the Bible are. Place your hand upon this book and swear that you will do as I have proposed." And as he finished speaking he reached a Bible which lay upon the table and held it before his victim.

Mechanically she placed her hand upon it and took the required oath.

"Good!" exclaimed Luke Davis, "now we understand each other. But beware how you attempt to evade the oath which you have taken, for by the Heaven above us, if you play me false your lover's life as well as your own shall pay the forfeit. Think not to escape. Like a sleuth-hound will I hang upon your track by night and by day, and when you least expect it the avenger will be upon you! Now give me some supper, for I am well nigh famished."

"Oh, no—no!" exclaimed Lily, in a tone of terror; "I am not living here alone. A shopmate of mine is living with me. She has not yet returned from work, but I expect her every moment. I would not have her see you here for the world! Spare me that humiliation at least! Here—here is money—go and buy your supper at a restaurant!" And as she spoke she took from her pocket-book some money and placed it in the trembling hand of Luke Davis.

"Just as you please," returned the ruffian, with a scowl, "though the probability is that your dainty friend will see me somehow, and I don't see why it might not as well be now. Besides, I don't think I'm such a fright, all things considered. To be sure, a clean shave and a new suit of clothes would set me off to better advantage, and now that I have found a place of refuge I shall not be much longer without them. So farewell, my daughter, till we meet again, which will probably not be for some days unless I am

pressed by circumstances to seek shelter here. In which case do not forget your oath." And with a stern look Luke Davis left the apartment just as Jennie Brown, singing gaily, entered.

"What on earth was that rough-looking fellow doing here, Lily?" asked Jennie, as she threw off her outside garments and regarded her friend with some scrutiny. "I declare," she continued, "you look as pale as a ghost, and are trembling all over, and I don't wonder at it. Such an ill-looking fellow as that is enough to frighten anybody! What did he want? What did he say to you? Do you know him?"

"Oh, Jennie!" returned Lily, imploringly, "don't ask me any questions. Please don't!"

"Well, I won't, if it distresses you," said the kind-hearted girl, in a tone of sympathy; "but, Lily dear, I think you must be pretty well satisfied by this time that I am your friend, and if you have any secret trouble in which that fellow is concerned would it not be better to confide in me? It is so much easier to bear affliction when you have somebody to share it with you. Besides, I may be able to help you somewhat. Two heads are always better than one."

"Oh, Jennie!" exclaimed Lily, with deep gratitude, "you are a dear, good girl, and I don't see how I could live without your friendship. No sister could be kinder than you have been to me, and I love you dearly. There are no secrets between you and me but this one, and in this matter I cannot make you a confidant. I wish I could. Oh, I wish I could!" And Lily sighed deeply.

"Well, I won't urge you," returned Jennie, "so give yourself no farther trouble about it. I am not at all curious in the matter. My only desire was to serve you. But of course you know best what is proper, so let us drop the subject."

"Thank you, Jennie!" exclaimed Lily, with deep gratitude. "You are the best girl in all the world!" And then she added, after a moment of hesitation: "Who do you suppose called on me about an hour ago?"

"I'm sure I can't guess," returned her friend. "Who was it?"

"Ernest Hartley," replied Lily, blushing deeply.

"Good!" exclaimed Jennie Brown, clapping her hands for joy. "He came, you had a talk together, and made it all up—isn't that so?"

Lily nodded her head affirmatively.

"Of course you did!" continued Jennie, in a jubilant tone; "and I think I know a person who helped to bring it about, and that person was dear, foolish, simple Tony Tucker. He's the best fellow in the world if he is a little rough, and he's no fool either. He met Ernest at the Post Office, and had a talk about you, and it's my opinion that what he said had a great deal to do with bringing Ernest here. Bless him, he's always doing some good action! And now, Lily, that you have told me who has been here who do you think is coming here to-night?"

"I'm sure I can't guess," replied Lily.

"Well, I'll tell you," returned Jennie, "and I don't want you to start and turn pale when I mention his name—no less a person than that hypocritical scoundrel, Lord Mortimer Littleton."

"Oh, Jennie!" exclaimed Lily, with a shudder, "what leads you to suppose he will be here?"

"Because I invited him," returned Jennie, with a merry laugh. "We are to have a surprise party here to-night, and he is to be one of the guests. You shall see what a warlike reception he will receive. The villain!" she continued, as her bright eyes flashed indignantly, "he shall learn what it is to insult a working girl!"

"A surprise party!" ejaculated Lily. "Please explain yourself, Jennie."

"Well, he will be the only one surprised," returned Jennie, again laughing. "The fact is the contemptible puppy expects to find me here alone, but there will be a select few in the next room who will pay their respects to him. Tony Tucker, and his brother Mat, and Michael Donovan, and his sister Mary, and a number of girls have been invited to see the fun and to assist in his lordship's capture—and, by the way, here they come!" and the next moment the party whom she had mentioned entered.

After they had exchanged greetings Jennie said:

"Now, good folks, we have not much time to spare, for his highness is to be here at eight o'clock, and it is already past seven. I must prepare to receive him. Here, Mary, help me to put on a kettle of water to boil and get out a tub from that closet, and set it down here between these two chairs. There, that will do. Now get me the skirt-board, which you will see standing in the closet, and a quilt from the shelf. There, that's it, and now we can talk awhile till the water is hot enough."

"Oh, Jennie!" exclaimed Lily, "you surely don't intend to scald the man!"

"Scalding is too good for him," returned Jennie, "and yet I don't intend to scald him exactly. I shall only give him a hot bath, that's all! It will make him

a little lively without doubt, but won't injure him much."

Then the conversation became general, and great was the satisfaction of all present in view of the anticipated fun. Tony Tucker was especially jubilant and could hardly contain himself as he thought of the picture Lord Mortimer would cut while in the bath. He said over and over again that "there never was such a gal as Brownie."

At length the water was sufficiently hot, and Jennie, seeing that the clock was on the stroke of eight, with Mary Donovan's assistance lifted the kettle from the fire, poured its contents into the tub, placed the skirt-board over the tub, the ends resting on two chairs on either side of it, and then covered the whole neatly with the quilt, so that it resembled somewhat a seete, covered with chintz.

"There!" exclaimed Jennie, "everything is ready for his lordship now, and as I live not a minute too soon, for here he comes! Now away with you all into the next room, and, mind you, not a whisper, or you may spoil all; in the course of a few minutes I will join you and tell you what to do."

Accordingly the party hastened to secrete themselves, and in another moment Lord Mortimer Littleton knocked at the door for admittance.

Jennie did not keep him waiting. She opened the door at once, and received her visitor with a low courtesy and a face wreathed in smiles.

"Good-evening, Miss Brownie!" exclaimed his lordship, in his sweetest tones and with the most winning suavity of manner; "I declare you are looking charming this evening! Venus herself was not as beautiful as you are!"

"Ah, your lordship is inclined to flatter," returned the shop-girl, with affected bashfulness.

"Not at all, Miss Jennie—not at all!" was the reply; "I couldn't flatter you if I should try, for you are too handsome. Why, I have been intimate with ladies of high rank not half as good looking or half as clever as you are! You're a clever girl; you are, 'pon honour!" And having thus delivered himself Lord Mortimer placed his shining beaver upon the table, and in response to Jennie's invitation seated himself upon the skirt-board which covered the tub.

"I hope we shan't be disturbed," he continued, as Jennie seated herself at his side; "but I say," he continued, suddenly, "how deuced warm it is here! By Jove it seems to me as though steam were rising somewhere! I hope the house isn't on fire, you know!"

"Oh, no!" returned Jennie, who was dreadfully apprehensive lest her trick should be discovered, "it's only the steam arising from the kitchen just beneath us. They have been washing, and there is a leak in the boiler, I believe."

"Oh, well, then it's all right!" said Lord Mortimer, in a tone of satisfaction; "I'm deucedly afraid of fire."

"And are you as much afraid of water as you are of fire?" asked Jennie, smothering a laugh.

"Well, I don't like water too well either," replied Lord Mortimer; "it's all very well, you know, when the weather is fair and the ocean is perfectly calm, but I don't like a storm at sea, because it's dangerous, you know, and then it's so disagreeable to get so beastly sea-sick. But I didn't come here to talk about such things. I came here to talk about love." And he attempted to pass one arm around the waist of the mischievous girl, whereas Tony Tucker, who was peeping through the keyhole, came near spoiling everything in his rage.

He would have rushed into the room and fallen upon Lord Mortimer at once, had he not been restrained by his companions, who begged him to be cautious, and at length succeeded in quieting him, but not till after he had muttered between his teeth:

"Let the sucker get his fin around her waist, that's all! I'm ah! Oh, won't I punice him? Oh, not at all! Oh! Oh, won't I fresco that mug of his! Now he's tryin' it on again! Oh, why can't I just go and split him once?"

"An' spile the fun for all the rest of us," whispered Michael Donovan; "howlid yer whist, ye spaleen!"

In the meantime Lord Mortimer had returned to the attack, but Jennie coyly kept out of his reach, and begged him to desist.

"It's all very well for you to be a little backward at first," said Lord Mortimer, in a tone of expostulation, "but that kind of thing won't do always. A fellow gets tired of it after a while—that is a fellow who loves as I do, you know. So be reasonable now, won't you, and give me a kiss?"

"Oh, you frighten me so!" exclaimed Jennie, with well-affected trepidation, as she again avoided him.

"Well, but you mustn't be frightened, you know," exclaimed Lord Mortimer, "for I'm not going to hurt you—I only want to make love to you, and there's

many a fine lady who would like to be in your place at this moment, I can tell you. Think of being a lord's wife, and having a fine establishment, with plenty of servants, and fine dresses, and a carriage to ride in. That's much better than working late and early for a paltry pittance, isn't it now? And that shall be your position if you are only reasonable."

And again he attempted to embrace her.

"Oh, wouldn't that be nice!" exclaimed Jennie, with well-affected rapture, but still keeping out of his reach; "but are you sure you are in earnest? You are not making game of me, are you?"

"Upon my soul, I'm not," exclaimed the unprincipled fop, with apparent earnestness; "I love you frightfully. I do, by Jove!"

"I don't know whether to believe you or not," said Jennie, with a pretty pout. "You men are all so insincere! You told Lily Davis you loved her once, and you didn't marry her after all."

"That's true," answered Lord Mortimer, readily, "and I did think I loved her a little at one time, but that's a very different affair. She is not to be compared with you, you know, any more than a hedgehog is to be compared with a bird of Paradise! You are not to be mentioned in the same day. You've got such stunning eyes, and such a mouth for kissing and such a form! By Jove, I'm just ready to eat you!"

"I've got a way to test your sincerity," said Jennie Brown, after apparently reflecting a moment, "and I shan't allow you to come near me till I try it. I am the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, and have the faculty of peering into the future when the conditions are favourable."

There was no superstition about Lord Mortimer, and to do him justice he was no believer either in witchcraft or fortune-telling.

He jumped at the conclusion that whatever Jennie's test might be it was as likely to turn out to his advantage as it was to his disadvantage, and he therefore said, readily:

"Well, I'm ready for the test, Miss Jennie, whatever it may be. I'm not afraid, you know, because I love you, and I know if your art is good for anything it will prove that fact. So proceed at once. I'll risk it. I will, by Jove!"

"Well, then, I must blindfold you securely, and you must sit right still where you are till I tap you three times on the shoulder, and then you must rise a few inches from your seat and sit immediately down again. Do you understand me perfectly?"

"Of course I do," returned Lord Mortimer, "that's easily enough understood."

"Well, then, I will begin," said Jennie, and taking a stout handkerchief she tied it securely around his eyes, completely blindfolding him.

This completed she began making passes over his his, muttering some unintelligible jargon as she did so.

At length she said:

"It is revealed to me that your love for me is equal to my love for you, and that you are to be to me the source of much pleasure—that you are destined to afford my friends and myself much merriment, and that you are to have all the success which you deserve."

"Well, that's first-rate so far," interrupted Lord Mortimer, in a tone of triumph, "I don't want any better fortune than that, by Jove."

"You are soon to go over the water," continued Jennie, "and you will meet with a mishap. It will not injure you seriously, however, and it will eventually do you good. It will probably enlarge your ideas, give you a better view of yourself and improve your character generally, although you will not think so when the event happens."

"Possibly not," again interrupted Lord Mortimer; "one isn't apt to fall in love with misfortune; although it may be a blessing in disguise. That isn't human nature, you know. But go on, I begin to like this kind of thing. It is growing interesting. It is, by Jove."

"When this event happens," continued Jennie, "you will be greatly surprised, and when you are at the worst there will be many around you who will rejoice at your mishap, and say it serves you perfectly right, and when you come to review the matter in the silence of your chamber you will agree with them."

"Well, but I say, Jennie," interrupted Lord Mortimer, for the third time, "all that has got nothing to do with love, you know. Let the oracle stick to that—because that is what I am most interested in. How is the love affair coming out? That's what I want to know, by Jove!"

Jennie hesitated a moment and then she said, with a sudden start:

"Ha! what is this I see? You wish the oracle to speak of love, and so she does—and this is what she says: 'The time is coming, and it is not far dis-

tant, when you will be furiously angry with me and wish to run away from me. This is the common fate of all who lend an ear to insincere professions. Oh, man, man, what a monster of perfidy thou art!"

"Oh, that's all nonsense, you know!" exclaimed Lord Mortimer, indignantly. "I wouldn't give a farthing for your oracle! Run away from you indeed! Why, I'd stick by you if you had the smallpox! I would, by Jove! I wish this thing was finished now, for I am beginning to tire of it."

"Have patience a little while yet," resumed Jennie, "I will not detain you long now. I will retire but for one moment to work a charm, and when I return the first test shall be applied. Sit perfectly still where you are, and don't forget when you are touched three times upon the shoulder to rise a little and then instantly repeat yourself."

"Oh, I shan't forget, you know," returned Lord Mortimer, "but please hurry on with your charm, for this is exceedingly dry business. It's frightful, you know."

"I shall return almost instantly," replied Jennie, "and the first question which I put to you before you receive the signal to rise you must answer candidly and fully."

"Oh, I'll do that, you know, with great pleasure," answered Lord Mortimer, and the next moment he was alone.

(To be continued.)

THE SHAH OF PERSIA.

His Majesty the Shah of Persia, who is about to become a visitor to this country, and will doubtless prove one of the "lions" of the season, was born in the year 1829. His name is Nassir-ed-Din, or, as given more phonetically some years ago, "Nasir ed Deen Shah, Kajar, Es Sultaun el Khakan;" and he succeeded to the throne of Persia September 10, 1848, when only eighteen years of age. He is a son of the late king, Mahomed Shah, grandson of the famous Prince Abbas Miras (the Crown Prince), whose premature death in 1833 was a great loss to his country and people, and great-grandson of Feth Ali Shah. His mother is a princess of the royal family of Persia.

His Majesty has two children, Muzaffer-ed-Din, heir apparent, who was born in the year 1850, and Djilal-ed-Daulah, born three years later. When, however, we call the former "heir apparent" it must be remembered that it is within the power of the Persian monarchs to alter or to overrule the existing law of presumptive succession, and, disregarding the natural heir, to bequeath their crown to any member of their family.

The Shah, or, to call him by his full formal title, "Shah-in-Shah" (that is, "King of Kings") is absolute ruler within his dominions, and sole master of the lives and goods of all his subjects, both high and low. The whole revenue of the country being at their disposal, recent sovereigns of Persia have been able to amass large fortunes. That of the present occupant of the throne is estimated by Mr. Martin as amounting, if reports be true, to four millions sterling, one half of which is represented by diamonds, the largest of which, of 178 carats, and known as the Derya-i-Noor, forms, with other precious stones, part of the crown jewels.

The present sovereign of Persia is the fourth of the dynasty of the Kadahs, who gained possession of the crown just eighty years ago, after a civil war which lasted from 1779 to 1794, the first of the line being Agra Mohammed. He is handsome in person, intelligent, and liberal-minded. He takes an active part in the administration of his country, and is most desirous to secure the well-being of all classes of his subjects. He is, moreover, endowed with a highly cultivated mind, is well acquainted with the French language, and takes in several of the leading newspapers of Europe. His reign is remarkable for the introduction of many striking improvements, true marks of progress and civilization, such as the founding of a royal college for the study of all the sciences, the introduction of the telegraph, and the construction of the first made road in Persia.

Treaty for establishing telegraphic communication between India and Europe through Persia has been signed by the Persian Government and Mr. Alison, Her Majesty's representative at Teheran, and the exchange of the ratifications has already taken place.

As a proof of the liberality of the Shah it may be mentioned that, while adhering strictly to the religion of the Khoran, and regarded in Persia as the vicegerent of the Prophet, he not long ago granted to the Nestorian Christians in his dominions a site for a church, but also headed a subscription list with a handsome donation towards its erection—an example which was speedily followed by his own Ministers, the Russian, Turkish and French Ministers at the Court of Teheran, and the principal merchants of Persia.

The programme of the Shah's visit to this country has been settled. He will go to Man-

chester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Portsmouth, returning to London each day. He will pay two visits to Windsor, one to lunch with the Queen, and one to attend a review of troops which will be held in his honour. The Shah is a very good French scholar, so that there will be none of the difficulty of conversing with him that there was with the Sultan when he was here in 1867. He has set apart 5,000,000/- for his European journey.

A PORTRAIT OF CROMWELL.—A portrait of Cromwell by Cuyp was recently purchased by M. Thiers at the sale of the collection of the late Count d'Espagnac, for the moderate sum of 6,000/- The late President had given orders to his agent to go as far as 15,000/-

A NOVEL CHARM.—A rather novel claim for damages is about to be tried at Allahabad by Mr. Rawlins, sub-judge. It appears that a man offered a rose to a lady; between the leaves was placed powdered cayenne-pepper, and the lady in smelling the rose went into a fit of sneezing, and ultimately got so seriously ill as to render the constant attendance of two or three medical men necessary. She had to go away for a change, and the husband claims about 200 rupees as damages.

THE PRICE OF A SONG.—In a recent sale by Messrs. Puttick and Simpson, of Leicestershire Square, the copyright of Hatton's well-known song "Simon the Cellarer" produced the large sum of 400/-, the purchaser being Mr. J. Williams, of Cheapside. Also in the same sale there occurred the following popular part-songs: by R. L. Pearsall, for which high prices were obtained:—"Who shall win my lady fair?" 85/- 10s.; "Oh, who will pierce the Downe so free?" 35/-; and "The Hardy Norseman" 25/-, all of which were bought by Messrs. Novello, Ever, and Co., of Berners Street.

GOING EVILS.—Dr. Trall says in 1880 we shall be visited by plague, famine, and pestilential hot and cold weather, in consequence of the close-quarters Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune will come to with the earth. One of these planets alone is quite capable, in its close contiguity, of making things very unpleasant, but four of them together are likely to bring a train of calamities only to be averted or mitigated by the adoption of strict sanitary measures. The coming evils will, in the opinion of Dr. Trall, fall with especial severity on gamblers, tobacco-chewers and smokers, and tight-living young ladies.

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, VICTORIA PARK.—It is the intention of Her Majesty to grant the prayer of a petition to place a clock in the tower of the recently erected church of St. Mark's, Victoria Park, to mark the satisfaction felt by Her Majesty in her recent visit to the park and the East-end of London. All who take an interest in the church will be much gratified with the form Her Majesty's gift has assumed. This church, which is conveniently situated in Victoria Park, owes its inception to the late Mr. Culling Hanbury, M.P., son of Mr. Robert Hanbury, and has since been materially aided by that liberal firm.

AN ANCIENT GLASS CUP DISCOVERED.—An interesting archaeological discovery has been made by a peasant while ploughing in the neighbourhood of Arles, Bouches-du-Rhône, consisting of an ancient glass cup. It is composed of two portions; one in simple ordinary glass forming the vase, whilst the second is an ornament in red glass superposed. This latter forms a series of ovals united by knots curiously interlaced. On one of the sides is a Latin inscription, which has been deciphered: "Divus Maximinus Augustus." This object therefore belonged to the Emperor Maximinus Hercules, who resided in Gaul for a considerable time. The cup just found has no foot, and those for festivals were almost always made so. A slave standing behind the guest passed it to him full, and held it when emptied without its ever resting on the table.

MARRIED IN MASK.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the same Christmas Eve another of our characters sat listening to the bells. Twelve years of summer sun and winter frost had made sad havoc with her forehead, eyes, and hair. She sat, now beside the Christmas tree with folded hands and silvery hair, giving directions regarding the disposition of the toys upon the branches.

She could hear the voices of happy and eager children gathered in the adjoining parlour behind the folding-doors. They were the children of friends and neighbours, and the children of the poor. They knew that the meek, holy, gentle woman who was unseen was in there preparing to make them happy for the birthday of her Divine Friend.

Year by year she had been laying up treasures in Heaven; and now, after twelve more years of labour

among the poor, Christmas Eve had come again and she was mourning the death of her beloved daughter. But no tears, no loneliness could cause her love for and trust in Heaven. She believed that in answer to her many prayers little Bessie, the stolen child, would come to her again. And there, upon the topmost branch of the evergreen tree, hung a little white stocking, stuffed full, with the child's name written upon paper and pinned to it; and as she listened to the merry bells in the church tower, she was praying for the return of her darling, stolen summary, many years ago.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," she whispered. "My Protector will not keep Bessie away from me for ever."

The candles were all lit, the presents upon and beneath the tree were all labelled, and Mrs. Truelove, with feeble voice, bade the servant-maid ring the signal bell.

The folding-doors flew open and Mr. Truelove entered at the head of a throng of excited children and neighbours. The happy ones danced around the tree, shouting to each other, and some stood timidly beside the good woman, looking up into her beautiful blue eyes and noting the smooth, backward sweep of her grey hair. Old and feeble as she was, Bessie Truelove elicited over love and trust and tenderness. Some ran to her, length, and with glad voices told her they had recognized their own names upon some of the toys.

She shared their exultation and laughed with them, but her own little Bessie did not come. Her eyes ran over the features of the little girls in the room, but there was no face like the face of the lost one. When, ah, when would the little wanderer be sent back to her home? When, ah, when would Bessie come stealing forward in her timid little way to see what Santa Claus had hung for her upon the tree?

The toys were at length distributed, and the children, one by one, passed out into the hall and went home. No one remained beside the Christmas-tree but Mr. Truelove and his wife. Then one by one the candles upon the tree were extinguished by his hand and the gas turned out. All was darkness save where a little wax taper burned high upon the tree, and beside that tiny candle hung a little white stocking marked "Bessie." A little white stocking hanging there alone on every Christmas Eve since the little girl was stolen so many, many years ago.

Mr. Truelove bent over the aged woman and impeded a kiss tenderly upon the wrinkled forehead. She smiled and took his hand in hers, and said:

"Go to bed now. I will keep my vigil for Bessie once more."

He left her and she sat in the chair alone with the taper burning and the little stocking swinging high among the evergreen branches.

All was still now. The hours were late and the taper burned low, and slept, pleading with Heaven for her child. At last in the silence the clock in the neighbouring church tower tolled solemnly and slowly the hour of midnight. There came no sound of panting feet, no call of a childish voice. All was still.

The taper was nearly burnt out upon the tree when Bessie Truelove slowly arose to her feet and wearily mounted upon a chair and took down the little stocking and placed it in a side-board beside a row of small white stockings, stuffed full, which had been placed there year by year, marking the Christmas time as in gone and fled.

Then she looked up pleadingly to Heaven and said: "Thou dost not answer my prayer for some wise purpose. Blessed be Thy holy name. I have only to pray again. I trust Thee with all the affections of my heart."

At this instant the solitary taper flickered and burnt out. Bessie Truelove stood in utter darkness. Her heart was in darkness too.

At the moment "the good woman" concluded her vigil for her child in another section of the metropolis three friends were having their last supper together. The midnight-meal, so long in contemplation, had come at last. All three had contributed, days before Christmas Eve, money to make this supper worthy of the great holiday. They were all hard-working men in their respective employments. One was a carman, who owned his cart and horse. The second was a clerk in a great banking-house. The third was much older than his companions, and his black hair was streaked with grey.

The past twelve years had not dealt kindly with this mysterious man. A look of care had taken possession of once handsome features. He had been fearfully disappointed for twelve years. Day by day had he gone forth into the streets with but one idea, one purpose in his mind. He had been utterly baffled. All the streets of the great metropolis had become familiar to him. Although a foreigner born and bred he had come to know all the thoroughfares and lanes

and squares better than many a merchant. All, however, had proved to be valueless to him.

His familiar acquaintance with the faces of men who frequented the great marts, his knowledge of winding streets, his study of dwellings and their door-plates everywhere about town, all had been useless to him. He was foiled in his search. He could not find printed, engraved, or written anywhere the one name which he sought.

Then he directed his daily attention for twelve years to faces. He scrutinized closely every man's countenance that passed him in the street. But that one face upon which he longed to look ever evaded him. What had become of that long-expected face?

All the weary years he wandered up and down the streets, the corners with him—something which was an important part of his purpose, of his unflagging search. It was a violin, upon which he played with exquisite skill. He accumulated money with marvellous rapidity by his admirable musical powers. Fine ladies would beckon him under their windows to play. He ravished their cultivated ears by his wonderful skill. They threw him money and then admired the marvellous brilliancy of the dark eyes he cast up at them in gratitude.

But his eyes dwelt long upon the faces of beautiful women; he was ever looking behind them or beside them to see if he could not catch one glimpse of the long-looked-for face. Alas! alas! patience, perseverance and will were unwavering. The one face never was revealed to him.

Once as he played to a crowd who had paused in admiration the face passed him, but he did not see it. He was playing a martial tune of the Italian war. The owner of the passing face cared not for the war songs of Italy. "Why, oh, master of the violin, did you not chance to play that other tune which you knew so well?" Then that passing face so engrossed with thought would have turned to you like lightning, would have paused to listen, would have studied every line of your face as eagerly as the mother studies the lineaments of her child.

The search of twelve years had been utterly futile. The chief object had eluded the violinist's vigilance. But the years had not been entirely lost, they had not been utterly misspent. No. Two boys had grown to manhood while the violinist was growing gray. They had grown to manhood under his teaching, his advice, his wisdom. He had found them vagabonds and thieves. He had made them worthy citizens. He had watched over their words, their acts, their associations and their readings like a true father.

They loved him—they were inspired by him. All of the grand, the earnest, the beautiful in sentiment and action with which they were familiar they had learned from him. He loved them both, and every hour that he could spare from his great and engrossing search he devoted to their instruction. But one of them, the grand, the beautiful boy, with the fearless heart and with the dark, flashing eyes so like his own, that was his idol. To this boy's awakening intellect he devoted his finest touches, his most zealous work. Something reached out of this boy and grasped his heart with links like iron.

"I will try that handsome fellow," he said to himself one day. "and see if there is any trace of the sunny land in him."

The violin was taken out of the bag. "Listen," he said. "There is a land all beauty, with mild and genial air, upon which the sun loves to fall, and where the orange tree and the flower spring spontaneously from the soil. Its lakes are bluer, its skies more exquisite than any other on earth, its women dark-eyed and graceful beyond expression, and graceful because they cannot help it. Their grace is born of nature and not of culture. There is an inspiration in the climate and in the memory of the events which have from age to age inspired in that land which makes poets, artists, soldiers, and diplomats. That land has been at times the mistress of the world. And because she has been great her sons cannot but cherish the belief that she will be great again. For her liberties and her honour men in all ages have willingly laid down their lives. They are ready to do so again. Within the period of twelve years her sons have been tortured because they loved her. They have been tortured, and suppressed all means. There are songs of Italy which stir the blood of age to fever heat. There is music which exalts the souls of her children, and makes them defiant of all tyranny and willing to die as soldiers for her unity and her honour."

With eyes full of fire and enthusiasm he looked at the boy. The splendid face was eager, interested and expectant. The boy's brilliant eyes were upon him. Then he played upon his wonderful violin a hymn of battle and of martyrdom for Italy.

The listener was breathless as the stirring notes fell upon his ear. Then the magnetism of the music began to work upon his brain. His eyes dilated in

their beauty, his heart was thrilled. Then Ruffini sang to the music, giving the Italian hymn in sonorous English. The form of the boy seemed to dilate. He stood erect. Fire was in his eye. The wonderful melody had struck deep into his very being. He burst forth in one thrilling sentence:

"Give me a sword for Italy's defence!"

The singer threw aside the violin and folded the boy in his arms and kissed him.

"You have Italian blood in your veins, thank Heaven! Whence does it come? I will see to it that some day you shall serve Italy."

From that hour no father could have watched more tenderly and zealously over Sam than Ruffini. He taught him in the intervals of his night watchman's duty to read and write in both English and Italian. He educated him in arithmetic and mathematics. He taught him history by word of mouth, throwing into the narrative the fire of his own Italian soul.

Year after year rolled past and every day the mind of the youth was expanding under his tutor's teaching. The boy, Pup, would creep to them and, lying upon his bed flat upon his breast, would drink in their conversation until he too yearned to be educated and improved. With an inferior grade of intellect the former captain of the coveys acquired an education too.

Year by year Sam ascended the ladder of promotion in the service of Nicholas Rudd.

The night watchman became a clerk. He was determined to win his employer's regard, and he did win it in the end.

Step by step he mounted, and to the surprise of the other employees of Rudd he one day was made chief clerk. There was not a gain upon his name after he commenced to serve the great lord of millions. And still he clung to the humble room, and the humble fare which were superintended by his boyish associate and friend, Pup.

At last the latter applied to a horse and cart.

Ruffini and Sam united their contributions and purchased them for him. Now their meals taken together were brought in daily from a neighbouring restaurant. The cook had become a man.

Upon the Christmas Eve when Sam came in late to announce to his two friends that he could no longer reside with them on account of his wonderful promotion at the residence of his employer there were mutual congratulation and distress.

"Of one thing rest assured," said Sam. "I have now the opportunity of giving you a good life, my dear Pup. I am a partner in the firm, and I shall see that you have the monopoly of all the cartage connected with our warehouses. You cannot fail to put money in the bank now."

"But you will come to see us at this place, Mr. Toplofty?" said Pup, with difficulty suppressing the tears which struggled to be free.

"Of course I will," said the young partner of Rudd. "This will always seem to me most like home. This is my real father," he said, taking the hand of Ruffini; "and this my only brother," he added, putting his arm about the neck of the robust comrade.

All three stood for a moment in silence. Their hearts were too full for utterance.

Then Sam said:

"I always think on Christmas Eve of the little girl, my little Bessie, who was stolen from us. I wish we could find her. I have dreamed of her almost every month for twelve years. If she is alive she must be a beautiful young lady now. I hope she is happy."

"You had better take with you," said Ruffini, "to your new home that little toy of hers which you have always kept in my table-drawer. It will be pleasant for you to see it every day there as you have done here."

"Indeed I will," said Sam. "I was thinking of that myself this minute."

He turned away from his companions, and entered the room of the Italian. He soon reappeared, carrying the child's toy, which he had treasured so long.

He opened the paper and there it lay. The lapse of twelve years had thrown into the hands of the three friends money enough to keep them all warmly and comfortably clad, but poor little Bessie's darling doll, which she had hugged in storms and in sorrows, was utterly naked still.

They all laughed over its forlorn appearance, and then Sam wrapped it up again in the paper and thrust it into his pocket. With tremulous lips and warm embraces he bade his two friends farewell, and walked out into the cold night. The stars were shining. It was early Christmas morning, and snow had fallen. As he passed away from the humble place he heard behind him the violin of Ruffini. There was no song of war or gallantry heard within the house now. The Italian was softly playing and singing, as he looked out upon the stars, a simple Christmas hymn. Sam had heard it every Christmas morning for twelve years. He felt that he was leaving home behind him for ever.

Hardly had the young man gone a hundred yards from the house when a man in disguise came out from behind a pile of lumber and followed him.

As Sam walked leisurely on the disguised man dogged his footsteps. When the game paused the hunter paused.

The man had seen by the light of a street lamp the countenance of the new partner of Rudd just after he left the house. He did not see him issue from the house, but caught a glimpse of his face the instant after his exit from the hall.

He was not hidden behind the pile of lumber with the purpose of intercepting Sam. He was after different game, but the instant his keen eyes saw the young man he abandoned his original object, and, with a chuckle, started after the more valuable prize.

Slowly, steadily, but surely, he piped Sam, to use the phrase of the detective office. He held far enough back to prevent his game from noticing the pursuit.

Street after street was passed in this leisurely way, and the young banker suspected nothing. He was absorbed in meditation upon the brilliant future which was opening upon him.

Few young men have such inducements to joy and hilarity upon a Christmas-morning. His fidelity to business and to his employer, his self-denial in all amusements to which most young clerks are addicted, and his manifest purpose to be a thorough and reliable business man had won him the approbation of Nicholas Rudd, the great moneyed Sphinx, and had secured the gradual promotions for him.

But now the unexpected and bewildering climax had come.

Partner, adopted son and heir!

Now the three titles danced up and down in his brain in characters of fire. He knew that his name was about to be printed in letters of gold and nailed on high for anxious and wondering eyes to read. He knew that business papers and business envelopes would be stamped with his name in full "Samuel Rudd."

He knew that many, who before had looked coldly, perhaps haughtily upon him, would be transformed now into models of servility and deference. They would no longer call him Sam. Now it would be "Mr. Rudd."

How that name Rudd thrilled him. It had become his symbol of integrity, perseverance, success. Gratitude had made the name dear. Association had given it the halo of respect. When he was made, after the lapse of years, the confidential clerk a sense of pride had taken possession of him, not the pride which makes men cold, but an honourable pride.

The great merchant prince condescended to listen to his suggestions, and in many instances had been guided by them.

Now he would take a higher stand in the great house which controlled millions. He would do more than suggest. He would be expected to consult and advise.

His heart was full, full to repletion with the almost miraculous destiny which had elevated him from the cradle of the burglar to the dignity of the counting-house.

And there was something more than the dignity of his new position. His heart had been elevated as well as his condition.

The banker had invited him into the inner sanctum of his heart also. He had given him a place which could not be taken from him.

If the flames of some terrible conflagration should sweep away all the warehouses and business offices of Nicholas Rudd, and if fearful tempests should wreck all of the merchant-prince's ships and financial ruin result, Sam's place could not be vacated.

Come desolation of every temporal kind which makes men helpless beggars, the new partner could never desert the elder Rudd.

The man had said to him:

"Enter and take possession of my heart for ever; be my son."

With the earnest-hearted young man this was the greatest gift of all.

It made him thrill with the same wonderful exultation as the words spoken to him on the night when he entered the library masked in crape and revolver in hand.

"I will give my life for my new father," he said to himself as he walked on under the stars.

And during all that long meditation and that long walk the disguised man was following him. That pursuer was terrible when once fairly upon the right scent.

For years had the trail baffled him. By mere accident had he struck it again. He would follow it, now more keenly than ever before, for his professional pride was at stake.

He was a detective.

The world called him a great detective, because of the wonderful success which had crowned his many

efforts in the pursuit of criminals. He felt keenly his failure for so many years in three enterprises which had been entrusted to him.

He had not yet satisfied his three employers of his right to the title of detective.

He had, during the past twelve years, unearthed many criminal foxes and restored much valuable property to the rightful owners. But the particular three employers were by no means satisfied with him.

Nicholas Rudd had received no tidings regarding his golden harp and chain. Mr. Truelove had heard nothing of his stolen child. The brother of Red-Eyed Mag had not yet put eyes upon his murderer.

The unfortunate detective had not even been able to put his eyes upon the man whom Timothy Robot had seen issuing with the fork from the sunken shanty.

"I've got you at last, my handsome fellow," he said aloud, as he was about to follow Sam into the greatest street where Nicholas Rudd resided.

The young man had turned the corner, and the detective drew back a little so that his pursuing footsteps might not be heard by Sam in the stillness of the night.

"There's many a slip between the cup and the lip!" hissed a voice close to the detective's ear so that he started and turned back, and was instantly flung to the pavement and shrouded in total darkness.

A detective, whose exploits, disguises, and dangers were to Pryor as the mask of a ball-room is to the multiform transformations of a Parisian spy, had the person of Sam so muffled and gagged in a great cloak upon the pavement that he could neither see, hear, speak, nor move.

Arms of iron were holding Pryor to the earth. They did not relax their terrible and determined pressure until he was nearly suffocated; then slowly was the cloak removed from his head until he could see the stars above him in the steel-blue sky.

"Speak but one word until I bid you and this will drink your life!" was hissed in his ear.

He saw the gleam of a dagger, and remained passive. He was a coward, but he was utterly at his assailant's mercy.

Gradually the iron arms relaxed their hold as it became manifest that Pryor would not give the alarm to the night-watch.

"I intend you no harm, and will free you as soon as your game has fled," said the assailant, still holding the man prostrate.

"What do you mean?" said the detective—"what game?"

"Don't attempt to play ignorance with me," said the terrible voice. "You were following the steps of that young man with an evil intent."

"I was following him in the interest of law and justice," said the detective; "I am no assassin or robber."

"If you meant him no bodily harm why did you follow him by stealth?"

"He is suspected of murder, or complicity with the murderer," said Pryor. "In the name of law and justice let me go or he will escape!"

"Of murder?" exclaimed the assailant. "When and where?"

"Years ago, when a boy, circumstances pointed to him as the murderer of a woman called 'Red-Eyed Mag'; and he, having already had terrible altercations and combats with her, was the last person known to have been with her before she was found in a pool of her blood. But, for Heaven's sake, let me go! He will escape me again!"

"Listen to me!" said that terrible voice. "I have never heard aught of this murder. I don't believe that young man did it. But, guilty or innocent, I intend to protect him. Remember what I say to you now, and remember it when you see my face no more! If through your instrumentality that young man swings upon the gallows, I will, sooner or later, and when you least expect it, bury this dagger so deep in your heart that no second blow will be required to free you from the cares and responsibilities of life. I mean this. Now you are free. Arise and turn back upon your course."

Pryor stood upon his feet, and saw the mysterious stranger enveloped in the cloak which had so effectually gagged him. The man was slowly walking off in the direction Sam had gone.

When the stranger had turned the corner the detective slowly followed him. When he too had turned the corner he encountered the man with the cloak standing to intercept him, and with his dagger held threateningly at him. He feared to pass down that street.

With the quickness of thought Pryor retraced his steps and sought to intercept Sam by passing around the houses into the same street farther down. When he had made the circuit neither Sam nor the stranger could be seen. The trail then to the murderer of Red-Eyed Mag was lost again.

chester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Portsmouth, returning to London each day. He will pay two visits to Windsor, one to lunch with the Queen, and one to attend a review of troops which will be held in his honour. The Shah is a very good French scholar, so that there will be none of the difficulty of conversing with him that there was with the Sultan when he was here in 1867. He has set apart 5,000,000 for his European journey.

A PORTRAIT OF CROMWELL.—A portrait of Cromwell by Cuyp was recently purchased by M. Thiers at the sale of the collection of the late Count d'Espagnac, for the moderate sum of 5,000f. The late President had given orders to his agent to go no far as 15,000f.

A NOVEL CLAIRE.—A rather novel claim for damages is about to be tried at Allahabad by Mr. Rawlins, sub-judge. It appears that a man offered a sum to a lady; between the leaves was placed powdered cayenne-pepper, and the lady in smearing the nose went into a fit of sneezing, and ultimately got so seriously ill as to render the constant attendance of two or three medical men necessary. She had to go away for a change, and the husband claims about 700 rupees as damages.

THE PRICE OF A SONG.—In a recent sale by Messrs. Pattick and Simpson, of Leicester-Square, the copyright of Matton's well-known song "Simon the Cellarer" produced the large sum of 400f. The purchaser being Mr. J. Williams, of Cheapside. Also in the same sale there occurred the following popular part song by R. J. Peacock, for which high prices were obtained:— "Who shall win my lady fair?" 85f. 10s.; "Oh, who will o'er the Downes suffice?" 39f.; and "The Hardy Norseman," 24f., all of which were bought by Messrs. Novello, Ewer, and Co., of Berners-Street.

COMING EVILS.—Dr. Trall says in 1869 we shall be visited by plague, famine, and pestilential heat and cold weather, in consequence of the other-quarters Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune will come to with the earth. One of these planets above is quite capable, in too close a contiguity, of making things very unpleasant, but four of them together are likely to bring train of calamities only to be averted or mitigated by the adoption of strict sanitary measures. The coming evils will, in the opinion of Dr. Trall, fall with especial severity on giant-toms, tobacco-chewers and smokers, and tight-lacing young ladies.

St. MARK'S-CHURCH, VICTORIA-PARK.—It is the intention of Her Majesty to grant the prayer of a petition to place a clock in the tower of the recently erected church of St. Mark's, Victoria Park, to mark the satisfaction felt by Her Majesty in her recent visit to the park and the East-end of London. All who take an interest in the church will be much gratified with the form Her Majesty's gift will assume. This church, which is beautifully situated in Victoria Park, owns its inception to the late Mr. Culling Hanbury, M.P., son of Mr. Robert Hanbury, and has since been materially aided by that liberal firm.

AN ANCIENT GLASS CUP DISCOVERED.—An interesting archaeological discovery has been made by a peasant while ploughing in the neighbourhood of Arles, Bouches-du-Rhône, consisting of an ancient glass cup. It is composed of two portions; one in simple ordinary glass forming the vase, whilst the second is an ornament in red glass superposed. This latter forms a series of ovals united by knots curiously interlocked. On one of the sides is a Latin inscription, which has been deciphered "Divus Maximianus Augustus." This object therefore belonged to the Emperor Maximianus Hercules, who resided in Gaul for a considerable time. The cup just found has no foot, and those for festivals were almost always made so. A slave standing behind the guest passed it to him full, and held it when emptied without its ever resting on the table.

MARBLING IN MASK.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the same Christmas Eve another of our characters sat listening to the bells. Two years of summer sun and winter frost had made sad havoc with her forehead, eyes and hair. She sat now beside the Christmas tree with folded hands and silvery hair, giving directions regarding the disposition of the toys upon the branches.

She could hear the voices of happy and eager children gathered in the adjoining parlour behind the folding-doors. They were the children of friends and neighbours, and the children of the poor. They knew that the meek, holy, gentle woman who was master was in there preparing to make them happy for the birthday of her Divine Friend.

Year by year she had been laying up treasures in Heaven; and now, after twelve more years of labour

among the poor, Christmas Eve had come again, and she was mourning the death of her beloved daughter. But no tears, no loneliness could cease her love for and trust in Heaven. She believed that in answer to her many prayers little Bessie, the stolen child, would come to her again. And there, upon the topmost branch of the evergreen tree, hung a little white stocking, stuffed full, with the child's name written upon paper and pinned to it; and as she listened to the merry bells in the church tower, she was praying for the return of her darling, stolen so many years ago.

"Though He stay not, yet will I trust in Him," she whispered. "My Protector will not keep Bessie away from me for ever."

The candles were all lighted; the presents upon and beneath the tree were all labelled; and Mrs. Truelove, with feeble voice, bade the servants ring the signal bell.

The folding-doors flew open and Mr. Truelove entered at the head of a throng of excited children and neighbours. The happy ones danced around the tree, shouting to each other, and some stood timidly beside the good woman, looking up into her beautiful blue eyes and noting the smooth, backward sweep of her grey hair. Old and feeble as she was, Bessie Truelove elicited even tenderness and tenderness. Some ran to her at length, and with glad voices told her they had recognized their own names upon some of the toys.

She started their exhilaration and bade them sit, but her own little Bessie did not come. Her eyes ran over the features of the little girls in the room, but there was no face like the face of the lost one. When ah, when would the little wanderer be sent back to her home? When, ah, when would Bessie come stealing forward in her timid little way to see what Santa Claus had hung for her upon the tree?

The toys were at length distributed, and the children, one by one, passed out into the hall and went home. No one remained, beside the Christmas-tree, but Mr. Truelove and his wife. Then one by one the candles upon the tree were extinguished by his hand and the gas turned out. All was darkness now; where a light was taper-burned high upon the tree, and beside that tiny candle hung a little white stocking marked "Bessie." A little white stocking had hung there alone on every Christmas Eve since the little girl was stolen so many, many years ago.

Mr. Truelove bent over the aged woman and impelled a kiss tenderly upon the wrinkled forehead. She smiled and took his hand in hers, and said:

"Go to bed now. I will keep my vigil for Bessie once more."

He left her and she sat in the chair alone with the tiny taper-burning and the little stocking swinging among the evergreen branches.

All was still now. The hours were late and the taper burned low, and she sat pleading with Heaven for her child. At last in the silence the clock in the neighbouring church tower tolled solemnly and slowly the hour of midnight. There came no sound of passing foot, no call of a child-like voice. All was still.

The taper was nearly burnt out upon the tree when Bessie Truelove slowly staggered her foot and weakly mounted upon a chair and took down the little stocking and placed it in a wainscot beside a row of small white stockings, stuffed full, which had been placed there year by year, marking the Christmas time as it came and fled.

Then she looked up pleadingly to Heaven and said: "Thou dost not answer my prayer for some wise purpose. Blessed be Thy holy name. I have only to pray again. I trust Thee with all the affection of my heart."

At this instant the solitary taper flickered and burnt out. Bessie Truelove stood in utter darkness. Her heart was in darkness too.

At the moment "the good woman" concluded her vigil for her child in another corner of the metropolis three friends were having their last supper together. The midnight meal, so long in contemplation, had come at last. All three had contributed, day before Christmas Eve, money to make this supper-worthy of the great holiday. They were all hard-working men in their respective employments. One was a carman, who owned his cart and horse. The second was a clerk in a great banking-house. The third was much older than his companions, and his black hair was streaked with grey.

The past twelve years had not dealt kindly with this mysterious man. A look of care had taken possession of his once handsome features. He had been fearfully disappointed for twelve years. Day by day had he gone forth into the streets with but one idea, one purpose in his mind. He had been utterly baffled. All the streets of the great metropolis had become familiar to him. Although a foreigner born and bred he had come to know all the thoroughfares and lanes

and squares better than many a merchant. All, however, had proved to be valueless to him.

Unfamiliar acquaintance with the faces of men who frequented the great marts, his knowledge of winding streets, his study of dwellings and their door-plates everywhere about town, all had been useless to him. He was foiled in his search. He could not find printed, engraved, or written anywhere the one name which he sought.

Then he directed his daily attention for twelve years to faces. He scrutinized closely every man's countenance that passed him in the street. But that one face upon which he longed to look ever evaded him. What had become of that long-expected face?

All the weary years he wandered up and down the streets he carried with him something which was an important part of his purpose, of his unflagging search. It was a violin, upon which he played with exquisite skill. He accumulated money with marvellous rapidity by his admirable musical powers. Friends would beckon him under their windows to play. He ravished their cultivated ears by his wonderful skill. They threw him money and then admired the marvellous brilliancy of the dark eyes he had upturned in gratitude.

But his eyes dwelt not long upon the faces of beautiful women; he was ever looking behind them or beside them to see if he could not catch one glimpse of the long-looked-for face. Alas! alas! patience, perseverance, and will were unavailing. The one face never was revealed to him.

Once as he played to a crowd who had paused in admiration the face passed him, but he did not see it. He was playing a martial tune of the Italian war. The owner of the passing face called out for the war song of Italy. Why, oh, master of the violin, did you not chance to play that other tune which you knew so well? Then that passing face so engrossed with thought would have turned to you like lightning, would have paused to listen, would have studied every line of your face as eagerly as the mother studies the lineaments of her child.

The search of twelve years had been utterly futile. The chief object had stilled the violinist's vigilance. But the years had not been entirely lost, they had not been utterly misspent. No. Two boys had grown to manhood while the violinist was growing gray. They had grown to manhood under his teaching, his advice, his wisdom. He had found them vagabonds and thieves. He had made them worthy citizens. He had watched over their words, their acts, their associations and their readings like a true father.

They loved him—they were inspired by him. All of the grand, the earnest, the beautiful in sentiment and action with which they were familiar they had learned from him. He loved them both, and every hour that he could spare from his great and engrossing search he devoted to their instruction. But one of them, the grand, the beautiful boy, with the fearless heart and with the dark, flashing eyes so like his own, that was his idol. To this boy's awakening intellect he devoted his finest touches, his most zealous work. Something reached out of this boy and grasped his heart with like a iron.

"I will try that handsome fellow," he said to himself one day, "and see if there is any trace of the sunny land in him."

"The violin was taken out of the bag. "Listen," he said. "There is a land all beauty, with mild and genial air, upon which the sun loves to fall, and where the orange tree and the flower spring spontaneously from the soil. Its lakes are bluer, its skies more exquisite than any other on earth; its women dark-eyed and graceful beyond expression, and graceful because they cannot help it. Their grace is born of nature and not of culture. There is an inspiration in the climate and in the memory of the events which have from age to age transpired in that land which makes poets, artists, soldiers, and diplomats. That land has been at times the mistress of the world. And because she has been great her sons cannot but cherish the belief that she will be great again. For her liberties and her honour men in all ages have willingly laid down their lives. They are ready to do so again. Within the period of twelve years her sons have been tortured because they loved her. They have been tortured, and suppressed all means. There are songs of Italy which stir the blood of age to fever heat. There is music which exalts the souls of her children, and makes them defiant of all tyranny and willing to die as soldiers for her unity and her honour."

With eyes full of fire and enthusiasm he looked at the boy. The splendid face was eager, interested and expectant. The boy's brilliant eyes were upon him. Then he played upon his wonderful violin a hymn of battle and of martyrdom for Italy. The listener was breathless as the stirring notes fell upon his ear. Then the magnetism of the music began to work upon his brain. His eyes dilated in

their beauty, his heart was thrilled. Then Ruffini sang to the music, giving the Italian hymn in sonorous English. The form of the boy seemed to dilate. He stood erect. Fire was in his eye. The wonderful melody had struck deep into his very being. He burst forth in one thrilling sentence:

"Give me a sword for Italy's defence!"

The singer threw aside the violin and folded the boy in his arms and kissed him.

"You have Italian blood in your veins, thank Heaven! Whence does it come? I will see to it that some day you shall serve Italy."

From that hour no father could have watched more tenderly and zealously over Sam than Ruffini. He taught him in the intervals of his night watchmanship to read and write in both English and Italian. He educated him in arithmetic and mathematics. He taught him history by word of mouth, throwing into the narrative the fire of his own Italian soul.

Year after year rolled past and every day the mind of the youth was expanding under his tutor's teaching. The boy, Pup, would creep to them and, lying upon his bed flat upon his breast, would drink in their conversation until the two yearned to be educated and improved. With an inferior grade of intellect the former captain of the cavaign acquired an education too.

Year by year Sam ascended the ladder of promotion in the service of Nicholas Rudd.

The night watchman became a clerk. He was determined to win his employer's regard, and he did win it in the end.

Step by step he mounted, and to the surprise of the other employees of Rudd he one day was made chief clerk. There was not a stain upon his name after he commenced to serve the great lord of millions. And still he clung to the humble room and the humble fare which were superintended by this boyish associate and friend, Pup.

At last the latter applied to a horse and cart.

Ruffini and Sam united their contributions and purchased them for him. Now their meals taken together were brought in daily from a neighbouring restaurant. The cook had become a woman.

Upon the Christmas Eve when Sam came in late to announce to his two friends that he could no longer reside with them on account of his wonderful promotion at the residence of his employer there were mutual congratulation and distress.

"Of one thing rest assured," said Sam. "I have now the opportunity of giving you a good lift, my dear Pup. I am a partner in the firm, and I shall see that you have the monopoly of all the cartage connected with our warehouses. You cannot fail to put money in the bank now."

"But you will come to see us at this place, Mr. Topiary?" said Pup, with difficulty suppressing the tears which struggled to be free.

"Of course I will," said the young partner of Rudd. "This will always seem to me most like home. This is my real father," he said, taking the hand of Ruffini; "and this my only brother," he added, putting his arm about the neck of the robust cavaign.

All three stood for a moment in silence. Their hearts were too full for utterance.

Then Sam said:

"I always think on Christmas Eve of the little girl, my little Bessie, who was stolen from us. I wish we could find her. I have dreamed of her almost every month for twelve years. If she is alive she must be a beautiful young lady now. I hope she is happy."

"You had better take with you," said Ruffini, "to your new home that little toy of hers which you have always kept in my table-drawer. It will be pleasant for you to see it every day there as you have done here."

"Indeed I will," said Sam. "I was thinking of that myself this minute."

He turned away from his companions and entered the room of the Italian. He soon reappeared, carrying the child's toy, which he had treasured so long.

He opened the paper and there it lay. The lapse of twelve years had thrown into the hands of the three friends money enough to keep them all warm and comfortably clad, but poor little Bessie's darling doll, which she had hugged in storms and in sorrows, was utterly naked still.

They all laughed over its forlorn appearance, and then Sam wrapped it up again in the paper and thrust it into his pocket. With tremulous lips and warm embraces he bade his two friends farewell, and walked out into the cold night. The stars were shining. It was early Christmas morning, and snow had fallen. As he passed away from the humble place he heard behind him the violin of Ruffini. There was no song of war or gallantry heard within the house now. The Italian was softly playing and singing, as he looked out upon the stars, a simple Christmas hymn. Sam had heard it every Christmas morning for twelve years. He felt that he was leaving home behind him for ever.

Hardly had the young man gone a hundred yards from the house when a man in disguise came out from behind a pile of lumber and followed him.

As Sam walked leisurely on the disguised man dogged his footsteps. When the game passed the hunter paused.

The man had seen by the light of a street lamp the countenance of the new partner of Rudd just after he left the house. He did not see him issue from the house, but caught a glimpse of his face the instant after his exit from the hall.

He was not hidden behind the pile of lumber with the purpose of intercepting Sam. He was after a different game, but the instant his keen eyes saw the young man he abandoned his original object, and, with a chuckle, started after the more valuable prize.

Slowly, steadily, but surely, he piped Sam, to use the phrase of the detective office. He held far enough back to prevent his game from noticing the pursuit.

Street after street was passed in this leisurely way, and the young banker suspected nothing. He was absorbed in meditation upon the brilliant future which was opening upon him.

How young men have such inducements to joy and hilarity upon a Christmas-morning! His fidelity to business and to his employer, his self-denial in all amusements to which most young clerks are addicted, and his manifest purpose to be a thorough and reliable business man had won him the approbation of Nicholas Rudd, the great moneyed Sphinx, and had secured the gradual promotions for him.

But now the unexpected and bewildering climax had come.

Partner, adopted son and heir! Now the three allies danced up and down in his brain in characters of fire. He knew that his name was about to be printed in letters of gold and nailed on high for envious and wondering eyes to read. He knew that business paper and business envelopes would be stamped with his name in full "Samuel Rudd."

He knew that many, who before had looked coldly, perhaps haughtily upon him, would be transformed now into models of servility and deference. They would no longer call him Sam. Now it would be "Mr. Rudd."

How that name Rudd thrilled him. It had become his symbol of integrity, perseverance, success. Gratitude had made the name dear. Association had given it the halo of respect. When he was made, after the lapse of years, the confidential clerk a sense of pride had taken possession of him, not the pride which makes men cold, but an honourable pride.

The great merchant prince condescended to listen to his suggestions, and in many instances had been guided by them.

Now he would take a higher stand in the great houses which controlled millions. He would do more than suggest. He would be expected to consult and advise.

His heart was full, full to repletion with the almost miraculous destiny which had elevated him from the craggy mask of the burglar to the dignity of the count-in-counsel.

And there was something more than the dignity of his new position. His heart had been elevated as well as his condition.

The banker had invited him into the inner sanctum of his heart also. He had given him a place which could not be taken from him.

If the flames of some terrible conflagration should sweep away all the warehouses and business offices of Nicholas Rudd, and if fearful tempests should wreck all the merchant-prince's ships and financial ruin result, Sam's place could not be vacated.

Come desolation of every temporal kind which makes men helpless beggars, the new partner could never desert the elder Rudd.

The man had said to him:

"Enter and take possession of my heart for ever; be my son."

With the earnest-hearted young man this was the greatest gift of all.

It made him thrill with the same wonderful exultation as the words spoken to him on the night when he entered the library masked in cape and revolver in hand.

"I will give my life for my new father," he said to himself as he walked on under the stars.

And during all that long meditation and that long walk the disguised man was following him. That pursuer was terrible when once fairly upon the right scent.

For years had the trail baffled him. By mere accident had he struck it again. He would follow it now more keenly than ever before, for his professional pride was at stake.

He was a detective. The world called him a great detective because of the wonderful success which had crowned his many

efforts in the pursuit of criminals. He felt keenly his failure for so many years in three enterprises which had been entrusted to him.

He had not yet satisfied his three employers of his right to the title of detective.

He had, during the past twelve years, unearthed many criminal foxes and restored much valuable property to the rightful owners. But the particular three employers were by no means satisfied with him.

Nicholas Rudd had received no tidings regarding his golden harp and chain. Mr. Truslove had heard nothing of his stolen child. The brother of Red Eyed Mag had not yet put eyes upon her murderer.

The unfortunate detective had not even been able to put his eyes upon the man whom Timothy Rusbust had seen issuing with the fork from the sunken shanty.

"I've got you at last, my handsome fellow," he said aloud, as he was about to follow Sam into the greatest where Nicholas Rudd resided.

The young man had turned the corner, and the detective drew back a little so that his pursuing footsteps might not be heard by Sam in the stillness of the night.

"There's sure a slip between the cup and the lip!" hissed a voice close to the detective's ear so that he started and turned back, and was instantly flung to the pavement and shrouded in total darkness.

A detective, whose exploits, disguises, and dangers were to Pryor as the mask of a ball-room is to the multi-form transformations of a Parisian spy, had the pursuer of Sam so muffled and gagged in a great cloak upon the pavement that he could neither see, hear, speak, nor move.

Arms of iron were holding Pryor to the earth. They did not relax their terrible and determined pressure until he was nearly suffocated, then slowly was the cloak removed from his head until he could see the stars above him in the steel-blue sky.

"Speak but one word until I bid you and this will drink your life!" was hiss in his ear.

He saw the gleam of a dagger, and remained passive. He was no coward, but he was utterly at his assassin's mercy.

Gradually the iron arms relaxed their hold as it became manifest that Pryor would not give the alarm to the night-watch.

"I intend you no harm, and will free you as soon as your game has fled," said the assailant, still holding the man prostrate.

"What do you mean?" said the detective—"what game?"

"Don't attempt to play ignorance with me," said the terrible voice. "You were following the steps of that young man with an evil intent."

"I was following him in the interest of law and justice," said the detective; "I am no assassin or robber."

"If you meant him no bodily harm why did you follow him by stealth?"

"He is suspected of murder, or complicity with the murderer," said Pryor. "In the name of law and justice let me go or be will-escape!"

"Of murder?" exclaimed the assailant. "When and where?"

"Years ago, when a boy, circumstances pointed to him as the murderer of a woman called 'Red Eyed Mag,' and he, having already had terrible altercations and combats with her, was the last person known to have been with her before she was found in a pool of her blood. But, for Heaven's sake, let me go! He will escape me again!"

"Listen to me!" said that terrible voice. "I have never heard aught of this murder. I don't believe that young man did it. But, guilty or innocent, I intend to protect him. Remember what I say to you now, and remember it when you see my face no more! If through your instrumentality that young man swings upon the gallows, I will, sooner or later, and when you least expect it, bury this dagger so deep in your heart that no second blow will be required to free you from the cares and responsibilities of life. I mean this. Now you are free. Arise and turn back upon your course."

Pryor stood upon his feet, and saw the mysterious stranger enveloped in the cloak which had so effectively gagged him. The man was slowly walking off in the direction Sam had gone.

When the stranger had turned the corner the detective slowly followed him. When he too had turned the corner he encountered the man with the cloak standing to intercept him, and with his dagger held threateningly at him. He feared to pass down that street.

With the quickness of thought Pryor retraced his steps and sought to intercept Sam by passing around the houses into the same street farther down. When he had made the circuit neither Sam nor the stranger could be seen. The trail then to the murderer of Red Eyed Mag was lost again.



"GIVE ME A SWORD!"

The detective hurried on, still hoping to overtake the young man. But in a few minutes he saw that it was too late. Then he paused and listened at several at the side streets, but no one like Sam passed that way. The trail was lost for the present. But for this man of indomitable perseverance and will a valuable certainty had been established that night. Sam was still alive, and by his dress evidently in a prosperous condition. Was he a successful thief? The detective who had been looking for him for more than twelve years could only answer his own mental question in the affirmative. He had never known any boy or man who consorted with thieves turning out well. The possibility of Sam's reformation never entered his mind. Being a close observer of events and a thinker he could not form the hypothesis of a reformation. Thieves do not become chief clerks, bankers, or respectable citizens. Hence this faithful detective determined to hunt for Sam among an entirely different class of men. It was evident to him that the boy must consort with well-dressed thieves now. He had recognized his face at once. No beard had been allowed to grow as a disguise upon Sam's features.

He was the same handsome, dark-eyed fellow, only more mature, more manly, more attractive. The detective was too well gifted with the memory of faces to be thrown off by twelve years of development in face and form. That was the long-sought Sam. There could be no doubt about it.

Finally Pryor, after a long pause, during which he stood in the deep shadows of an area, and reflected and listened for footsteps, concluded that it was wise for him to discontinue the search for the night and seek his bed. Slowly he walked on then, bitterly disappointed that he had been thwarted when so close upon his game. Who was this mysterious and iron-limbed stranger who had followed him in noiseless shoes and with the suddenness of light pounced upon him from behind? A confederate doubtless of the young thief, a man who meant murder, as he had threatened if Pryor succeeded in bringing Sam to the gallows.

There had been that in the tones of the stranger which satisfied the detective that the man meant to slay him, that he would be as good as his word when the contingency arose.

But Pryor knew that it would never do to turn back from a legitimate purpose simply because an outlaw threatened him. A man who hunts the lawless must be always expectant of lawless treatment. But who was the defender of Sam? The first impression the detective had of the stranger's identity was when he was walking away from him to turn

the corner. He walked like Old Hawk, for whom also he had been searching for twelve years. But then if it was indeed that crafty, ill-featured for who had been seen to leave the shanty with the fork why should he now express his belief in Sam's innocence? Formerly Old Hawk had, in conversation with him, endeavoured to throw suspicion on the boy. Why, if this powerful stranger was indeed Old Hawk, had the man changed his tactics? Now he defended Sam's innocence and would slay any man who brought him to the gallows.

As Pryor walked on he dismissed the supposition. It could not be Old Hawk. Who then had come with noiseless feet to sweep away the trail once more? The stranger in the cloak had turned the corner as noiselessly as he had approached Pryor from behind. The detective saw at once that he must walk in shoes of felt. Over the man's face a dark felt hat slouched. His beard, doubtless a false one, concealed his lower features. Who could he be? No matter.

The stranger had complicated Pryor's search. He had not only thrown him off the scent, he had made the pursuit of Sam eminently hazardous. Death might strike him at any unexpected moment. An avenger who was disguised and unknown might thrust with the dagger when in the guise of virtue, order and respectability.

Pryor's heart never faltered even in this new condition of affairs. He was indomitable in his peculiar line, and that line was craft and disguise. He saw that he must now adopt some new disguise, and while pursuing Sam must endeavour to identify the stranger among the young man's associates. But how to strike Sam's trail again, that was the problem. For twelve years and more he had failed to find him. There was no clue to be gained of him in the haunts of crime with which Pryor was familiar. While following other criminals he had never failed to make inquiries regarding the boy. Sam was utterly lost to all the members of the old gang at the shanty. They could learn nothing of his whereabouts.

As he paced on toward his bed the detective was sorely puzzled as to the course he should pursue. He had important jobs on hand for several employers, and his entire time could not be devoted to the search for Sam.

As he passed on he saw that a dwelling before him was brilliantly lighted.

Although it was near daylight a great entertainment had not yet closed. A splendid mansion was still in possession of revellers.

The ball music still tempted the majority of the dancing guests.

Before the mansion still lingered carriages and liveried servants awaiting the exit from the entertainment of their owners.

Occasionally ladies magnificently attired in ball dresses, and with flowers and diamonds in their hair, would issue from the great entrance and sweep down the stone steps to their carriages.

Then the carriage door would close with a snap and the horses would speed away with their burdens.

The detective took a position upon the opposite side of the street just under a street lamp and watched the exit and departure of several parties.

After a time a young lady, graceful as a sylph, and arrayed in a cloud of white silk and illusion, tripped daintily down the steps attended by an elderly lady and a young gentleman, and entering carriage drove off at the same time with two other carriages.

As the carriage containing the young lady passed the detective a white lace handkerchief fluttered out from the window and fell under the wheels of the vehicle.

The detective ran for it and found that the carriage had stopped, and the owner was looking out, and back, and directing the attention of the footman to it.

Pryor was beside the door of the carriage in a few seconds holding the handkerchief up to the beautiful angel-like owner and receiving her warm expressions of gratitude for his courtesy.

He looked her full in the face and saw that she was beautiful and her neck white as snow.

The light from the street lamp was full upon her face and partially exposed bosom.

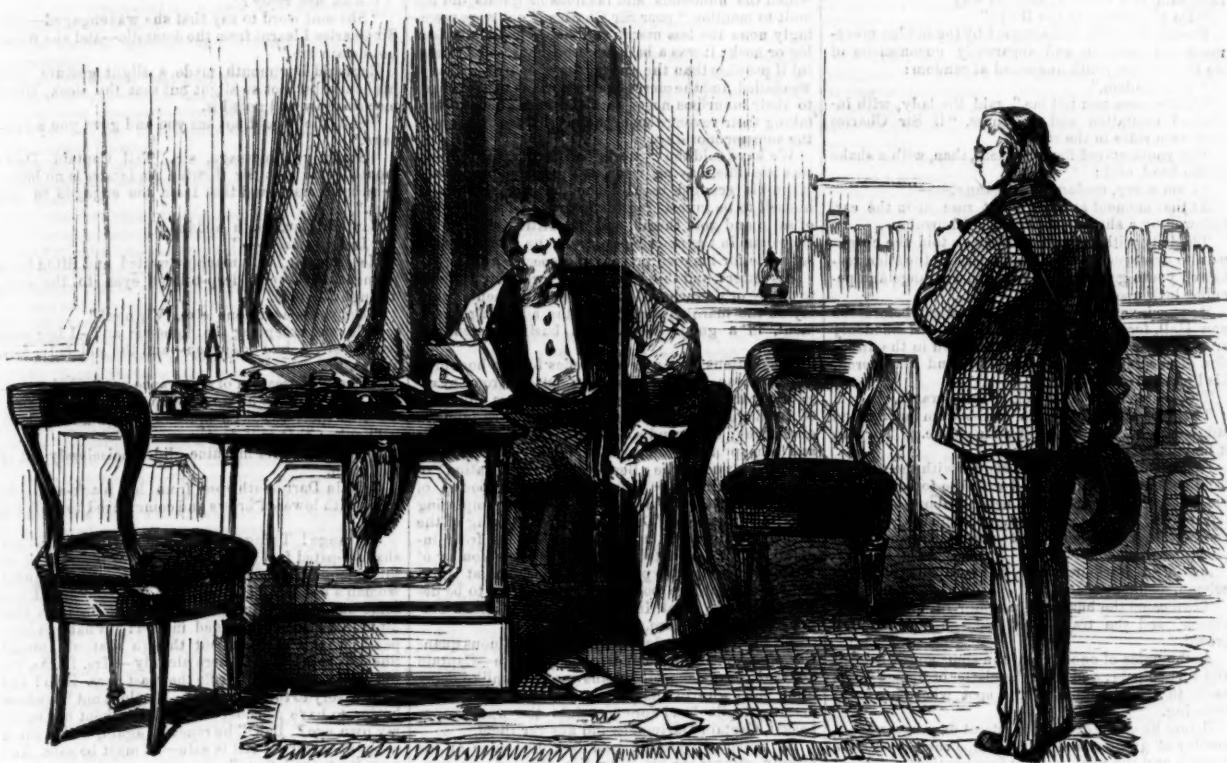
Before she had concluded all she would have said the horses started off violently and ran swiftly. Pryor was soon left far behind. The coachman was tired and eager to reach home.

The detective ran after the vehicle with all the speed that he was capable of. He ran a mile in his determination to overtake the carriage and ascertain who were its occupants. He gave in, however, and the vehicle passed out of sight. He had seen upon the young lady's neck the antique harp and chain which so long he had desired to grasp. So peculiar was its formation from the descriptions which had been given him that he knew it at once.

With the bitterness of a second disappointment in one night he exclaimed, as he sat upon the kerbstone to rest:

"That is the necklace, and its wearer is little Bessie."

(To be continued.)



FICKLE FORTUNE.

By the Author of "Maurice Durant," etc.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Change! Change!
Didst think the world wold stand still, man?

Butler.

WHILE Captain Dartmouth and some of his friends were risking their necks over hurdles and a widened brook for the amusement of the others, a young man was wearily toiling up the hill to Dale.

He was a slim, but well-built young fellow, with an air of good breeding about him that was scarcely borne out by his face, for what could be seen of it was of a dark hue, made rather pallid-looking by the huge blue spectacles perched on the nose, while (in direct antagonism) his hair, which to match his complexion should have been black, or at least brown, was of an unmistakable and somewhat brilliant red.

Evidently the young gentleman was no stranger in Dale, for at every turn of the long, dusty road he paused, and, shifting the little wallet he carried on his back to a fresh position, looked curiously round about him.

Sometimes, as, for instance, when the new row of cottages by Manor Farm met his view, he seemed lost in meditation, and nodded once or twice with an approving air.

But as he reached the top of the hill and came within sight of the new Hall which reared its stately head above the trees like a new and substantial Tower of Babel, he stopped point blank in the road, and, opening his eyes wide behind the blue spectacles, stared with unbound amazement.

For a few minutes he seemed too astounded to proceed, but, still keeping the spectacles turned upon the new palace, he walked slowly on, and with an air of puzzled bewilderment gained the new gates, which in all the glory of iron moulding presented a magnificent and imposing barrier to the outside world passing by.

As if unable to take in enough of the sight by a long stand-up gaze, the youth seated himself upon one of the huge stone boulders flanking the gate, and leaning his chin upon his hands let his eyes wander from cellar grating to garret casement, reveling in a long, scrutinizing gaze.

Presently, while he was still looking, an old farm labourer trudged by.

The youth turned quickly, and in a voice slightly tinged with an accent that might be foreign but could not have been recognized as belonging to any language in particular, said:

[A SECRETARY INDEED.]

"Good-morning."

"Good-morn'ng, master," replied the old man, with apt civility.

And touching his wrinkled forehead he essayed to proceed, but the youth arrested him with:

"Can you tell me what place this is?"

The old man pulled up, and, leaning on his hoe, turned with a significant smile.

"You be a stranger in these parts?"

"Yes," nodded the youth, "quite."

"Ay, ay, so I was thinking," returned the old man.

"Well, this be the new Hall."

And he removed his eyes from the youth to gaze at the enormous place with admiring awe.

"The new Hall," repeated the youth. "Humph! Well, it looks new—"

"Ay, it looks new, don't it?" assented the old man, with quiet delight. "So 'ud anybody say, but it hasn't, not quite, you know. 'Tis only the outside as one may say, on'y coat and clothin'; the bricks and mortar, and 't stones be the same as when it was called 'Dale."

"Oh," said the youth, rather strangely, and with a sudden drop of his face, "so this used to be called the Dale, eh? How long ago now?"

"Two year nigh upon," replied the old man, pausing at the evident interest which the strange wayfarer took in the new Hall, the pride of the county. "Two year nigh upon. Ay"—this with a slight smile—"it be more'n two year since 't ould square died."

The youth uttered an exclamation, and sprang to his feet, letting fall the knapsack with a small crash.

The labourer stared.

"There must be some ants here—somewhere nigh," remarked the youth, sinking down upon the stone again and looking round him carefully while he rubbed his leg ruefully. "I think I'll change my seat," and still keeping his face, which was white and working, no doubt by the sudden sting—ants can sting, and pretty sharply—picked up his wallet and seated himself upon the opposite stone. "So the old squire—died, you say, two years ago?" he repeated, looking down, but speaking with a tone of curious interest. "And this place was built upon the old house, eh?"

"Yes, that be it," sighed the old man, taking off his battered hat and wiping his brow with a glaring bandana. "It be a wonderful change—wonderful change! If Squire Darrell could come fro' his grave yonder, he'd never know the place."

"I don't think he would," muttered the youth, sorrowfully.

"I beg t' pardon?" said the old man, not catching the reply.

"I don't suppose he would," said the youth. "This looks such a very grand place. And pray to whom does it belong?"

"To the capt'n—Captain Dartmouth," replied the old man.

"Captain Dartmouth!" echoed the youth, so glibly and with such an expression of amazement and indignation that the old labourer stared, but the youth continued, in a colder and more indifferent tone: "Captain Dartmouth! A sea captain, I suppose? Bought it, eh?"

"No," sighed the old man, "he didn't buy it. T' squire left it 'im by will. He be a sojer, not a sea captain."

"By will?" repeated the youth. "Did he leave him anything else beside the old house—which he lost so little time in effacing?"

"He left him everything," answered the old labourer, with a certain bitterness in his tone. "Everything—Dale, lands and money and all."

"Ah," said the youth, with a certain hesitation in his voice. "There were no other relations I suppose; that is no nearer?"

The labourer looked at him a minute before answering, then with a sudden reserve, as of a servant respecting his master's business, replied:

"No—none nearer than the captain. He was his neffie."

"No son, no niece?" asked the youth, carelessly, and with a yawn that necessitated his covering his face with his hand. "No son or daughter or niece?"

"No," said the old man, shortly, "leastways—no none." "Good-day to you, young sir."

And with another touch to the forehead he moved on.

The youth, after another long look at the house beyond the gates, rose likewise, and, with averted face, passed into the road.

Before he got fifty paces a sudden shout broke the mid-day stillness, a shout followed by a mingled roar of excitement, a shout and uproar of a crowd interested to the heart in some spectacle or accident.

The youth turned to listen and saw a carriage coming down the road towards him.

He stepped on one side just in time to escape the horse—just in time, and so narrowly escaping it that his face almost touched the window, through which he saw a lady's face.

The lady saw him and suddenly pulled the check-string.

The coachman pulled up, the window was let down,

and the lady, who had a pleasant, mournfully sweet face, said, in a hurried, anxious way:

"Do you belong to the Hall?"

Seemingly much embarrassed by the sudden movement and question, and apparently unconscious of its import, the youth answered at random:

"Yes, madam."

"Then—can you tell me," said the lady, with increased hesitation and eagerness, "if Sir Charles Anderson rides in the race?"

The youth stared for a moment, then, with a shake of the head, said:

"I am sorry, madam, but I cannot—"

At that moment another short rose upon the ear, followed by a shower of braves and hurrahs.

The lady with augmented distress told the coachman to drive on, and, sinking back, left the slim, red-haired youth gazing after her with a strange and peculiar look upon his face.

He stood, very much as he had stood, before the new Hall, for quite a minute, then, as if suddenly aroused from a dream, started forward in the direction of the tumult. His face paled and bewildered, his lips but moving.

The course lay at the back of the terrace.

This fact the slim youth learnt from an excited lad, whom he had arrested by the sleeve. To gain it he must make a hasty retreat.

He strode into one of the avenues with the promptitude of one well acquainted with the topography of the place, but as one of the new shrubberies cut off the thoroughfare, with a turn, turned it away in another direction, he stood perplexed and non-plussed.

Again the roar burst forth, followed this time by a solemn, sudden silence.

Then came the buzz and murmur of innumerable voices and the trample of a large and excited crowd.

At the voice of one person the slim youth started and turned pale; and then the clatter of horses' hoofs came in the direction of the spot where he stood listening.

Before he could decide on retreat or progression, a medley of grooms and stable-hands rushed into the avenue, and the next moment four gentlemen dressed as jockeys galloped towards him.

At their head rode one—the handsomest and most distinguished looking of them all. He was pale and annoyed looking, and bit his lips with supposed passion, and, slashing cruelly at his horse, he dashed past the youth like a thunderbolt with the other three, clattering at his heels.

The youth turned and looked after them with a white face and firmly set lips.

The next instant the avenue was filled with fashionably dressed men and women. They were all talking fast and with troubled eagerness.

The youth, watching keenly all the while, drew back behind one of the old trees, and, waiting until the stream had passed on, took hold of a small stable-boy by the arm and asked what had happened.

"Why, where 'yer been?" retorted the lad, with impudent astonishment. "Ain't yo seen the race? One o' the finest runs as ever I seen! Look, to see the cap'n clear 't brook—lor'! but he be a jokin' 'un."

"A race?" repeated the youth. "Ah, I see; I feared there might have been an accident."

"Accident?—oh, ah! yes—yo mean the fair 'un, Sir Charles Anderson. Ah, yes, he's been an' pitched head foremost and a broke his neck, I'll be sworn."

And the imp chuckled with delight.

"Sir Charles Anderson," repeated the youth, thoughtfully, as if trying to recall the name, then, with a flash of recollection lighting up his face, added "Ay, I know, and he yo say is killed?"

"Not killed, on'y 'splashed' head foremost; he be took to 't Warren, yonder. Sh—sh!" he broke off, suddenly. "Here comes 't cap'n."

The youth had scarcely time to fall back behind the tree, while the stable-boy, thundered off, when Captain Dartmouth strode rapidly past.

He had hastily thrown off the masquerading silk, and as hastily thrown on a light coat.

His face was as dark as night—darker than even it was in the old days when a certain young girl used to shrink from it, but the slim youth seemed to feel no fear of him as he stepped from behind the tree and looked after the retreating figure. His small hands were clenched at his sides, and his lips shut tight, looking more defiant than frightened, more threatening than amiable.

CHAPTER XL.

Look well where no suspicion rests, for there, The chances are, will be the snare.

The morning after the race arrived.

It was nearly noon, but the great palace on the hill was still quiet, and to all appearance wrapped in sleep.

The eventful day had finished up with a ball—at which the numerous and fashionable guests did not omit to mention "poor Sir Charles;" but were seemingly none the less merry and happy for his broken leg or neck; it was a ball more brilliant and successful if possible than the one on the opening night as it was called, and the merry-makers, who had not retired to their luxurious nests until the small hours, were taking their revenge upon the bright, fresh hours of the summer morning.

We have said the "guests" advisedly, for the host was less idle, having risen at the early hour of ten, taken his scented bath, donned, or rather sufficed to be invested in his luxurious dressing-robe of satin and gold thread, and was sitting sipping his chocolate in the morning-room of the elegant suite set aside for his own private and special use.

His letters, and these were many, were not suffered to annoy or distract his first waking moments, they lay on the marqueterie desk in the adjoining apartment, in a goodly heap, from business men and friends.

Subscriptions from new companies for the honour of his name as director; begging letters from evangelical persons, societies and collectors on behalf of the Red Crossed Jackot Society for the Equipping of aborigines; the grand society for distributing code and cheap fuel amongst the starving Africans of Bolivar; the Benevolent Organisation of Charitable Humbug Society, and other bodies of that ilk; letters from penitent clerics imploring the new Queen of Dale to ease the living of the parish upon grateful unassigned; letters from indefatigable fox-hunters who demand the honour of Captain Dartmouth's presence at the soiree at Holywell House on the occasion of an address to be delivered by the great Indian Stampeder, known 'low-mane Foxes, Esq., etc., etc.

All this correspondence and a multifarious quantity of other sort—business and pleasure—Captain Dartmouth was expected to answer, and, unlike many other men who in his place would pitch the whole tumultuous pile head foremost into the waste-paper basket, Captain Dartmouth did answer them.

He accepted, refused, bestowed his name or his twenty guineas, as his discretion directed; he neglected none, not one, for Captain Dartmouth was a man who looked forward to the future, who had plans and hopes, prospects and ambitions.

All these applicants and correspondents were but atoms in the sun of humanity, yet he never forgot that the atoms conglomered make the man, and that the man is the engine which propels the world—propels the world; and all the mighty忙usters of the Captain Dartmouth class who prey upon it.

He was ambitious, he had wealth in abundance; he had honour and power—but he must have more.

He will marry, as he told himself as he sipped his chocolate with cool and crafty lips, that looked into the bottom of the cup as if it were the bottom of men's hearts. He will marry the Countess Lucille, he had power, but he must have greater still.

He must have power in England, in parliament. All these might help him—begging-letter writers, fox-hunters, though they merely added to the voice he needed.

A knock at the door broke the thread of his thoughts. He set the costly dainty toy of a cup in its equally costly saucer, and composing his face, that always wore a mask even to his jockeys, said, lowly:

"Come in."

The door opened, and the captain's own man—a discreet, silent, well-oiled piece of machinery glided in.

"Oh, you are back," said Reginald Dartmouth.

"Give me, some, more chocolate."

The man glided forward, took the cup to the small French contrivance standing on a saucer at the end of the apartment, filled it, and placed it before his master without a word, but with a gesture of devotion and respect that spoke nearly volumes.

"And how is Sir Charles?"

"No better, sir," said the discreet man, with a silent, shadowy sort of voice, devoid of all expression—as such a servant should be. "No better, sir; indeed I was givin' to understand a little worse."

The captain frowned.

"Whom did you see?"

"Miss Goodman's maid, sir," replied the man.

"Miss Goodman's maid," reported the captain, gazing thoughtfully at the cup. "Did you ask to see Miss Goodman?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man, with the slightest shadow of surprise in the world that his all-powerful master should think it necessary to ask the question. "You desired me to do so if you remember, sir, and I did. I asked her to see Miss Goodman, and requested the domestic to inform her that if she were engaged, I would willingly wait until she could see me."

The captain nodded approvingly.

"And her reply?"

"She sent word to say that she was engaged—with Sir Charles I learnt from the domestic—and she would not detain me."

Reginald Dartmouth made a slight gesture with his hands, but not so slight but that the sleek, silent machine saw and noted it.

"Sob, she would not see you and gave you a message."

"Scarcely a message, sir. Tell Captain Dartmouth's man that Sir Charles Anderson is no better—rather worse—and that I am too engaged to see him."

Captain Dartmouth nodded.

"Did you see—"

He stopped. The machine waited and lifted for a moment his liquid, deep-bedded eyes to the dark, thoughtful face.

"Did you see any one else, Vignes?"

"No one, excepting the domestic and—I beg your pardon, sir, I had forgotten—and the old lady, Mrs. Lucas."

A hasty expression of annoyance escaped the captain almost before he was aware of it.

"She there too!" he muttered, then added aloud.

"Thanks; that will do."

And the discreet machine glided noiselessly out of the room.

Captain Dartmouth rose from his black-and-gold chair with lowered brows and commenced to walk the room.

"Strange! Things work round to annoy me. That shallow-pated fool must break his worthless neck at this inopportune moment and fall into that quondam woman's hands. Strange, very strange! but I feel some undefined fear, some shadow of dread in that direction. Bah! undressed indeed! What can happen? what can come out though that old maid? She has one old cat there already—Mrs. Lucas, the old wench who used to rule the roost here. Hem! Did I do wisely to turn her out? Would it not have been better to have pensioned her off and kept her under my own eye? Bah!" he repeated again, with a shrug of the shoulders. "All is safe—all must be safe. And now for these letters."

And with a smile of censure that was almost defiant upon his handsome face he strolled into the next room.

The sight of the many superscriptions set him thinking again.

"Captain Dartmouth!—sh! I wonder how long we shall wait at that? Captain Dartmouth—Count Dartmouth—Lord Dartmouth, and, if all go well with Vizcarra's plans, perchance, Prince—Prince! It is a grand title even if Italian. Grand next to King—Prince!"

While he sat feeling his letters, repeating the magic word with fond tenderness, the soft, gentle knock of his valet came at the door again.

"Come in!"

The man entered, and, with a hesitation, commenced:

"I am very sorry to disturb you, sir; but, indeed, I regret it much, a young fellow—I am not sure whether a gentleman or not—demands audience."

Mr. Vignes had been sent to a Russian noble, and though he used the word "Vandance" almost unconsciously he was perhaps not unconscious that the ring of it was pleasant to his master's ears.

"He will take no refusal, and is so obstinate that I have ventured to—"

"What name does he give?" asked the captain, opening his first letter and laying it aside.

"He will give none—none whatever!" replied the machine.

The captain hesitated for a moment.

"I cannot send for him to see anonymous applicants."

He made this by some inexplicable reason or impulse an exception.

"I will see him," he said.

The valet glided out, and almost instantly glided in again, stepped aside and allowed a young man to enter.

Captain Dartmouth looked up and saw a dark face, deadened and made expressionless by a huge pair of blue spectacles—spectacles such as are worn by persons afflicted with weak or diseased eyes.

These, taken in conjunction with a decidedly red head of hair, and an impulsive, inept manner, were not prepossessing.

He frowned slightly, lifted another envelope and tore it open.

"You wished to see me?" he asked as a commencement.

"I did take that liberty, sir," said the youth, hurriedly, but with anything but a servile air.

The captain listened for a moment, as if to an echo.

He thought that he recognized the voice—yet

scarcely the voice—he had never heard so gruff and unmelodious a one—rather a certain something in the accent of the words.

He put another question and listened again with idle curiosity.

“It was no liberty that I am at present aware of. Pray why do you wish to see me?”

“Is—I have ventured to implore an interview, sir,” replied the youth, “to ask your assistance.”

The captain frowned.

“The major domo or the butler—” he hinted. But the youth ventured to interrupt him with a slight flush.

“Oh, not that kind of assistance, sir. I am in no need of money or food—that is at present.”

“Well?” asked the captain, coldly.

The youth went on, not glibly, and with hesitation that partook of feverish eagerness.

“I will tell my case, sir, in as few words as possible, not even waiting to thank you for your kindness in consenting to give me the interview.”

Then, seeing evident signs of impatience upon the worthy captain’s face, the youth ran on, rather brokenly:

“I was born in the adjoining village—Crayford—born and bred there, and intended for a farmer, but always since childhood had a hankering for the sea, and at thirteen ran away to the sea-coast. I took ship there as ship-master’s apprentice and went four voyages. In the third I was wrecked and flung into the hands of a foreign merchant off the Cape coast, who employed me as clerk and secretary—I implore you to hear me out, sir. Being unwell and fearing that the climate would be fatal, I ran away and came to England. I have been living in London for three weeks, searching for employment, and, finding none, at last ventured to tramp down home. But having arrived here I find all my family dead, sir, dead—every one, father, mother, and brother—I only had one—and—and—I have no one to whom I could apply for assistance. Stopping at the post office last even to rest a while, I heard of you, sir, and of your kindness of heart, and was struck, as it were, all of a sudden with an impulse to find my way to your presence, and beg of you some place in the household—as groom, or—servant, or boy—some place about your person or your household.”

The captain was astounded, but he had been master of the art of concealment much too long to show it.

He looked as if the youth’s tale was as probable and credible as a tide-table, and still opening his letters said:

“You were born in the next village, do you say? What is your name?”

“Stanfield—John Stanfield, sir,” replied the youth.

The captain laid down the letter last glanced at, and fixing his eyes upon the hideous spectacles, said, with unpleasant distinctness:

“And how much, pray, did you bring away with you from your last master’s?”

The youth started and clenched his hand, but after seeing the captain’s enquiring face for a moment his own lapsed into the old impassability, and, with a look, said:

“It wasn’t the money, sir, it—was—an affair of the heart.”

“Oh, a love affair, eh?” said the captain, leaning back in the chair and glancing from the youth to the mirror, in which his own elegant form and face were reflected. “So you made love to the master’s daughter, eh? And got whipped for it, then, and ran away?”

The youth nodded.

“And you ask me to take you into my employ with these credentials?” asked the captain, with a smile of mockery, but with a sharp inward look and the sharp thought “A ready tool in my power and under my thumb—the lad will be useful.”

“Yes, sir,” sighed the youth, with his gruff voice.

“And what assurance have I that you will not fall in love with my valuables? I have no daughter.”

“Sir,” exclaimed the youth, “sir, I swear by all I hold sacred—”

The captain held up his hand.

“My lad!” he said, with a sneer, “I had almost felt inclined to do something for you, but the conclusion of your adoration will decide me. I never believe a man who wears by all he holds most sacred. Your story is true, you say?”

“Most true, sir. Would I could give you some proof.”

“Hem,” said the captain, eying him, and then glancing at his letters. “You can—such as it is,” he replied, with a smile. “You were a clerk and secretary, you say; can you speak and write French?”

The youth hesitated a moment.

“Not so fluently as I could wish, but, sir, try me,

I implore. I know something of French and Italian, I have learnt of the sailors, and—”

Captain Dartmouth flung him a letter.

“Translate that.”

The youth took it up with a hand particularly small and particularly brown, and after hesitating a moment read with a fair accent and tolerably free translation.

“And this?”

And he threw him a short note of the convulsive—simply an invitation.

This also the youth translated.

“That is possible,” said the captain, after a moment’s consideration. “Now let me see a specimen of your secretaryship. Answer me those two letters. I accept the first, which requests my name as director; I refuse the second.”

The youth took up a pen, and, after reading the letters, wrote in a clear, round but clerky hand the answers properly worded and phrased.

Reginald Dartmouth glanced at them, and then, still holding them in his hand, said, with a cruel smile:

“How long were you bound to the gentleman from whom you escaped?”

John Stanfield thought for a moment, then with a lowered head said:

“Seven years.”

“And how much of that apprenticeship do you leave uncompleted?”

“Three, sir,” replied the youth.

“Three!” repeated Reginald Dartmouth. “Soh! Are you aware, my young friend, that the punishment our law inflicts upon a runaway apprentice is a matter of twenty stripes and some years’ imprisonment?”

The youth started and stared for a moment.

The captain went on:

“And that if I did my duty I should hand you over to the nearest magistrate to be returned to your unfortunate master?”

“Oh, sir, sir, I implore—I entreat!” said the youth, piteously dropping on his knees before the cruel face and holding up the small brown hands imploringly.

“Well—well—” muttered the good captain, with a smile. “I am too soft-hearted, my young friend. Get up; I am inclined to give you a trial. Will you show me a little gratitude—you ought to be grateful?”

The youth started and stared for a moment.

“Good,” nodded the captain, lounging to the table, “I will take you into my service as you requested, informing you as I do so that I never forgive any servant and never forget one—you understand me? Dishonesty, falsehood, bad faith—ay, one slip only—is unpardonable. I never forgive. Should you repeat the mistake you made with your former employer I, unlike him, shall not rest until you are in jail and on the road to the gallows. No words, please. Stand here. These letters require answering. The purports of their replies I dot down in the corner of each. You will amplify them as in the samples here in my hand and leave them open for my signature. When that is done go into the next room and wait till I want and send for you.”

The youth murmured a respectful assent, took his seat at the desk and commenced with his task.

Reginald Dartmouth leaned against the mantel-shelf—all carved and gilded in Louis Quatorze style—lighted a cigar and for a few moments watched the apt fingers as they flew across the page.

Then with one word “Remember” and a glance from his dark eyes that said much more—to wit “You are in my power—do not forget it!” strolled from the room.

The secretary waited until his master’s languid footsteps died away in the distance of the huge marble hall, and then with a suddenness that shook the gilt table, started to his feet, snatched off the disfiguring and dismising spectacles, and said, with flushed eyes and voice hushed and intense but anything but gruff:

“You deep-dyed villain, I will have you in my toils.”

There never was so discreet a servant as John Stanfield.

Vigiles, the machine-like valet, could not be more noiseless, serpent-like and silent.

The impassive, blue-spectacled secretary was more like a shadow than a human being—nay, more than once when he was seen, by mere chance, by some of the guests gliding noiselessly along to or from some mission of the all-powerful captain, the guests wondered and jokingly asked if he really were life and substance or shadow and phantom.

He seemed deaf and dumb as well as almost sightless, as he was supposed to be.

He turned his head neither to the right nor left if he was met on staircase or terrace, but was always to be seen, when he was seen, with lowered head, impulsive, expressionless face, looking straight before him,

as if the responsibility of the captain’s correspondence, and the captain’s secrets, perhaps, were weighing down or lifting him up and carrying him far away from the mundane world.

My lady, the countess, who was observant and quick, one day noticed this shadowy secretary, and, turning to her devoted adorer and slave, Reginald Dartmouth, the shadow’s master, said, with that smile which always lit up her face whenever she addressed him:

“Captain, have you a mate in your service, or is that lad a mystery?”

“Mystery, countess!” repeated the captain, in the soft, gentle, love-accented tones in which he always addressed the beautiful countess. “No mystery, I assure you; he is a very honest and very good fellow. Rather quiet, perhaps, but it is an advantage to him. He has a great deal to do, and I must in fairness to him say he does it well.”

The countess inclined her head.

Before he had finished his reply the beautiful woman had lost all interest, had indeed almost forgotten her question.

The far-away, absent, dreamy look had settled upon her face again, and brooded there to torment and perplex the man by her side.

Mystery! Ay, he was almost inclined to turn round upon her and ask what mystery dwelt within her heart and shadowed itself through her eyes.

Mystery! Reginald Dartmouth was a clever man—a wondrously astute, heart-reading man—but he had not read the soul of the beautiful Italian. As yet Lucille, Countess Vizarelli, was a mystery, a deep, unsolvable mystery.

“Countess,” he said, anxious to retain and keep awake her interest even in his shadowy secretary, “you shall satisfy your curiosity, if I dare call your passing interest by so strong a name—I will call him John!”

The youth, who had reached the end of the terrace upon which the countess and his master were sitting, by the time these words had passed, looked round with a start of attention as the name reached his ears, and with a half-bow came slowly back and stood in front of his master.

(To be continued.)

CHARLEY GALE.

By the Author of “*The Lily of Connaught*.”

CHAPTER XX.

Bob Wigmer had experienced Charley Gale’s “waxing” power before that, and seeing that he had so stout an ally as Jerry among the canal boys, he proceeded to retire from the field with more rapidity than grace.

But the canal boys hooted at him, and he was met and stopped by a large reinforcement of fellow drivers, big and small.

“What’s the matter, Bob?” they asked.

Bob stopped and faced around bravely.

“It’s that swell,” he said. “He’s mad ‘cause I changed hats with ‘m. As if that was any harm! As if everybody didn’t change hats when they could, git a better one.”

The boys laughed at the idea of any one getting mad at a change of hats, and Bob’s partisans encouraged him, as he was bareheaded, to go into the swell and take the hat that was his.

This proposal suited the Innocent’s ideas exactly, and, encouraged by the loud assurances of backing, he advanced toward his old-time enemy.

“Save yer clothes, Charley. I’ll do the fightin’!” roared Jerry, bouncing forward, and Bob retreated to his friends.

“Wait,” said Charley, stepping between the two crowds. “There is no need of fighting. I want to speak to Bob Wigmer—something it may be to his advantage.”

“That’s it.” “Listen to ‘m, Bob!” “He talks like a hand-organ!” cried several of the crowd.

“Bal!” exclaimed some of the disappointed ones.

“The one’s afraid, and the other daresn’t.”

“I don’t want to fight with you neither, Gale,” said Bob, coming forward and holding out his dirty hand, which Charley took. “You mustn’t be riled at my takin’ yer things. If you go on the canal with things like them, somebody’s bound to have ‘em. When I went drivin’ last they took my hat, and jacket, and shoes, and didn’t leave me notin’ but my shirtin’ pants. Yer on’y safe here when ye haven’t anything worth stealin’.”

The boys all laughed at this pathetic declaration; and Charley, looking around the jolly, half-naked crowd, could readily believe the Innocent’s words.

“Never mind that—don’t speak of it!” he said. “That’s all past. I want to talk of something else.”

Bob was full, and continued to overflow.

“Asides, if I did rob ye, I didn’t mash yer head as

I might a done; and if I hadn't brought Jerry, there, Moggridge would a knifed you."

The crowd were disgusted to see a peace-making where they had expected a fight, and dispersed rapidly, most of them going in the direction in which the prisoner had been taken.

"Come," said Jerry, "I'm hungry. You two fellers can talk as ye go."

He was doubtless as anxious to examine his spoils as he was to satisfy his appetite.

Charley and Bob followed him toward the tow-path.

"I'm glad Moggridge's nabbed agin," said Bob. "A feller'll have some peace now."

Charley turned and looked at him inquiringly.

"What do you know about Moggridge?" he asked. "What had he to do with you?"

"He was alias a-chasin' me all over and frightening my life out, and goin' to knife me if I peached on him, jest as he was you. 'Twas him druv me from home to take to the canal. I thought I'd got out of his clutches, an' yesterday he met me on the tow-path an' pulled me off of my mule."

"What for? What's the meaning of it?" asked Charley, with more eagerness than he allowed to appear.

"He an' dad's acquainted," answered Bob, "and they got something awwen them that they're alias a-whisperin' about. They say there's lot's o' money in it, and they want to mix me up in it; but I sez No. I know the way Moggridge gits his money."

"I should think ye did," said Jerry, "and his watches too, by the way you went for Charley's last night."

"You'd a done the same," cried Bob, sulkily.

"Course I would. But did ye ever hear me preach as if I wouldn't?"

"Go on," said Charley, nudging Bob.

"I didn't want to git into prison along 'th Moggridge," resumed the Innocent. "I hate prisons—they don't agree with me. I got enough o' them that time that your schoolmaster got me sent to one for ten days. So, when they wouldn't let me alone, but began clouting and kicking me to get me to go into their game, I give them leg-ball and hooked it."

"What was their scheme?" asked Charley.

"Some robbery, I s'pose," was the answer.

"Have you no idea of where or how it was to be done?"

"All I know is that they had a bundle of old papers that Muggy stole from some place; and they tried to make me believe that they was about me; and they tried to make me believe that I wasn't dad's child, and that my name wasn't Bob, as if I didn't know who I was as well as them; but I wasn't so soft."

Jerry laughed, and Charley, stopping him impatiently, asked:

"What name did they say was yours — did you hear?"

"Can't mind. Never had a good head for names, and I would not listen to that. I sez to them, 'Fancy I know my name,' sez I — 't's Bob Wigmer,' I sez, 'and it ain't a-goin' to be nothin' else.'

Charley was excited by this conversation, but he kept silent.

He was certain that he was now walking by the side of the boy whom Moggridge had declared to be the true son of the murdered captain, and the heir of the Galton estates—the boy whose place in the world had occupied so long.

He could hardly reconcile himself to the thought that they who had met and quarrelled so often as strangers should have had their fates linked together in infancy, that this coarse-minded, untutored, half-clothed boy could be the heir to wealth and refinement.

Was it possible he wondered that mere lack of cultivation could reduce him to the level of Bob Wigmer, or the possession of it raise Bob Wigmer to his?

"Bob."

That was the very name Moggridge had insisted on calling him, and, as he thought of that, the convict's words came to his mind.

"The other one's jest as miserable as you're stuck up—just what you'd a been only for me."

His pity rose for the injured boy. Yet he had his doubts too. He remembered Mr. Weldon's words about his resemblance to Captain Galton, and thought of his own dissimilarity to the escaped convict, while it needed no very great stretch of imagination to catch resemblances in speech and person between Moggridge and Bob. Besides, if Bob was the real heir, why should Moggridge wish to force him to believe so after committing a great fraud to disinherit him? No, Bob Wigmer must be Moggridge's own child.

But then, on the other hand, if Charley was the real Galton, why should Moggridge be so desirous of putting him in possession of his father's wealth?

The answer sprang to his lips in the convict's own words.

"Because you'd be easy proved, and I'd share the fortune I've worked for."

Then his early remembrances of his sunny home, and of the fair being whom he had always dreamt of as his mother puzzled him. That could not have been the hut of an alligator hunter—she could never have been the wife of a man like Moggridge. Still it was very perplexing, and his head whirled with the conflict of ideas as he went along.

"Charley Somethin's the name they was wantin' to call me," suddenly exploded Bob, and the words went to the hearer's heart like a charge of shot, for he remembered how Crittles and his wife had trained Peter to assume the name of Charles whenever the cloaked stranger came to visit them.

As the lightning displays the form of a night-cloud before unseen this flash lit up the behaviour of Crittles, which had hitherto been so dark. The wily pettifogger having obtained possession of the secret of these papers and his ward's importance, had struck upon the daring villainy of substituting his own son for the real heir of these far-away estates.

With the father dead and the only man who could dispute the heir's identity in a prison, or a state of outlawry, what bar was there to quiet possession? If trouble did loom up it would be easy for the heir by his lawyer's advice to change the immoveable acres into hide-away-able funds.

To be sure it was a very foolish and daring game for a lawyer. Charley thought a good lawyer would not have attempted it. But Ezra Crittles was not a good lawyer — and "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." The folly of the scheme was his own—the daring was his wife's.

That was it all in a nut-shell.

The escape of Moggridge from prison had somewhat disarranged the Crittles plan, but ten to one that on their disappearance they had gone to farther its accomplishment. What was more natural, when Moggridge had discovered the lawyer's scheme and recovered the papers by his burglary at Weldon's than that he, being the important identifier, should dream of substitution in his own interest?

That was the whole mystery—dark as midnight hitherto, now plain as a cypher when he held the key. He wondered that he had not seen through it before. He was as much pleased at his present acuteness as he was ashamed of his past dullness. There was a pride in being at least the person to ferret out the secret that had caused so much perplexity, and become the establisher of his own rights. The world became brighter at the thought, hope sprang to life again, and the image of Pinky Weldon came smilingly forward from the shadow land into which it had been receding during the last twenty-four hours of gloom.

"Where are these old papers you spoke of?" he asked, turning to Bob Wigmer. "Does your father keep them?"

"No, catch Muggy Moggridge giving them into anybody's hands but his own. Father's worked hard enough to git them in his clutches, but it's no go. Mogg sez he was tricked once by trustin' to some other person, an' he isn't a-goin' to be huccussed again."

"But where did he generally put them for safe keeping?"

"He generally carried them with him. Generally means always, don't it?"

Jerry turned with a laugh, and gave Charley a knowing look.

Charley started, for he remembered the black wallet which Moggridge had taken out of his pocket and replaced, and also Jerry's transfer of the convict's property just before the constable arrived. There was great significance in Jerry's look to him. Bob did not seem to notice it, but stepped from their direct course to pick up the dilapidated hat which he had kindly left for Charley's wear the night before.

"That's right, my beauty," roared Jerry. "Nothin' like taking to the old stock when the new slips through your fingers."

Bob didn't seem to relish the joke, for, glancing at the speaker with a malicious look, he said:

"I bet I hold on to the next I git."

They breakfasted at a half-way house at Jerry's expense. The cross captain had saved that free-and-easy genius the trouble of robbing him by paying him his wages and asking him affectionately never to let him see his face again.

This half-way house on the crowded level was a miserable sort of boat chandlery, having an overgrown barn attached, with a wisp of hay on a long pole projecting from its front to let all concerned know that provender was sold there.

Bob Wigmer very earnestly invited Charley and Jerry after breakfast to sleep off the past night's fatigue. The stoppage, he had learned, was caused by a breach in the embankment of the canal on the

next level, which wouldn't be repaired for several days, so they might as well take it easy.

Charley felt so worn out that he could have slept on a pile of stones, but he did not like the idea of sharing the general couch in the hay-loft; for, pleasant as it was to contemplate the canal boys as present examples of self-reliance and hardy perseverance and future capitalists, they were not desirable bed-fellows.

"You go and take a snooz yourself," said Jerry. "We'll be after ye. Charley and me wants to talk business. I'm as sleepy as an owl, and I'll pile in directly."

Bob left the shop, and Jerry, after watching him out, went to the door and saw him enter the barn. Then he returned to Charley in the little dingy room where they had breakfasted.

"Now, Charley, my boy," he said. "Let's see what we've made of this spec."

Charley started, flushed red, and grew very uneasy, as he saw his companion pull out Moggridge's dirk, and then a knife, tobacco, and some money, and lay them on the table in a business-like manner. It was a new and strange sensation for him to be thus made partner in a robbery against his will, and it was as unpleasant as it was strange.

"No, Jerry," he said, hurriedly rising from his seat. "I can't have anything to do with this. I have different notions on these matters to you."

Jerry looked at him and laughed.

"Sit down!" he said. "What's the matter with you? Ain't these things made by right? Didn't I flop him? Let the constables take the reward. If I'd got that they would have confiscated these. And I'm glad now I got ahead of them. I'm glad for your sake, Charley, 'coz I believe them papers you talked of may be found somewhere upon this child's person. Sit down."

Charley sat down. His anxiety made him forget his scruples.

"I s'pose you wonder why I've took such a likin' to you, Charley," said Jerry, scoring on the greasy table with the dirk. "I'll tell you. It was because you trusted me—because, when you met me in the dark and hadn't even seen my face, you wasn't afraid to tell me you had money, and you'd sooner pay for my supper than have me steal yours. That was it, Charley. I knew from that you was good-hearted an' plucky, and I said I'd travel with you. They call me a hard case, but I'll never go back on any one that trusts me. It makes a thief of me to doubt me. Well, if I travel with a feller, we're on snooks, and you've jest as good a right to half o' this as me."

Charley very rapidly disclaimed all partnership in the spoils, and thanked the generous Jerry for his good will. He hinted his anxiety to learn if the important papers were among the prizes. This made Jerry laugh.

Of course you know more in your little finger than I do in my whole carcass, but it does puzzle me to know how people's consciences will let them steal papers with writing on every chance they get and, if the paper's printed like a bank note, it's a dreadful crime to bone it, and they take on awful at the thoughts of it."

"But those written papers that this man had I have every reason to believe belong to me," said Charley; and then, in answer to Jerry's surprised look of inquiry, he ran rapidly over his whole story, with his doubts and his conflicting opinions, his hopes and fears.

He found Jerry an excellent listener, and his late accumulation of ideas flowed forth in full confidence.

Jerry "pooh-poohed" the idea of any relationship existing between Charley and Moggridge, and laughed heartily at the idea of Bob Wigmer being the son of a gentleman, or putting on the style of a wealthy man.

"Bob is like myself," he said. "He's only wealthy when he has a good square meal in him, and he'll never be gentle till he's in his coffin. But that's not them blessed papers that's been playing football so long."

He produced the black wallet which Charley had before seen, from between his shirt and his body, and opened it.

Charley gave a cry of joy and eagerly snatched the well-remembered packet tied with the dingy tape.

With trembling hands he undid the tying and spread the papers on the table.

"To Charles Quillington, Esq.," he read on a large yellow envelope, and lifting it he found that it had already been opened.

He paused a moment before drawing forth the enclosure, doubtful of the propriety of his reading what was addressed to another.

But he thought that other hands had broken the seal of this seal, and other eyes had scanned the contents.

He was more deeply interested than any other could possibly be, and why should he hesitate? He drew it forth and found that it was dated some time back. It read:

"**MY DEAR, WRONGED FRIEND.**—You will be astonished to read anything coming from me, after the manner in which we parted. The demon of jealousy was in me then, and I was lost to all feeling but brutal anger.

"I know now my folly and my fault, and I hasten to make all the reparation in my power. That is so little, so very little, that I should be delicate in addressing you but that my sense of duty urges me to do justice to your pure friendship and to the fair fame of her who was dearer to me than my life. We are now upon the eve of a great battle, and when this meets your eye I may be among the silent thousands. It would be no delicacy, but cowardice unworthy of a soldier, to leave my wrong to live and let the truth sink with my blood.

"We have been the unwitting puppets of a schemer—my own cousin, Manuel La Rosa.

"Good Heaven! How blind a dupe I have been. 'Twas he awaked my jealousy, by speaking of your love of her, and hinting that it was my wealth alone that gained my suit, that she still loved you although her hand was mine.

"He found a willing listener. Not content with hinting he threw his subtle proofs into my way. Proofs! pure inventions, though I believed them true. It was the greatness of my love that crazed me.

"You know the consequences of my frenzy. Our boy was stolen; 'twas I that paid the thief—La Rosa planned the theft—I fled the home whence happiness had fled—La Rosa urged me on—I tried to murder you—La Rosa prompted me. He was my evil spirit at whose beck came every misery to crush me down.

"And yet I thought him honest; I thought him as jealous of my honour as myself. I listened to him and smiled upon him, such bitter smiles as misery had left me. You wonder at my folly and laugh at this confession. You ask his purpose. 'Twas but a day or two ago I learned it. But that I was blinded by my jealousy I might have seen it long ago. His purpose was my wealth, to remove me and my offspring from his way.

"My hand trembles with agitation as I write. The other day when passing through a copse upon the rearward outskirts of our camp a soldier sprang upon me and tried to stab me to the heart. By Heaven's mercy I drew my sword in time to strike the weapon from his hand and seized him by the throat. Judge my surprise on finding that it was Moggridge, the man I had hired to steal my boy away, my accomplice in the torture of the heart I loved.

"With my sword-point at his heart I demanded the meaning of this murderous attempt. Trembling with fear of death he begged for mercy, and confessed that Manuel La Rosa had hired him to kill me, and had promised him the freehold of his farm when he should get possession of my property. My blood boiled, my brain seemed to be on fire. I cast aside the hireling stabber and rushed to find the murderous traitor.

"I now knew the bent of all his schemes and the friendship that made him cast aside his cowardice and join the army to be near me. I did not find him. He was not in his tent nor with his company. I was called to head-quarters.

"My passion moderated as I went, and I was glad I had not met him. I should have shot him. Now I should let him live until the serpent tongue that had traduced my wife should vindicate her fame. I should force him at the sword point to right the wrongs he had led me to commit.

"I saw him at the general's quarters. He seemed surprised at my appearance. The pallor of guilt was on his face, and his eyes quailed with terror when he saw the vengeance that gleamed in mine. I must watch him lest he evade me.

"I would drag him now to the home he blighted, to the justification of you and Lena, but that we are ordered to advance—the enemy waits to give us battle—I cannot leave the front. First the honour of my country—then hers.

"Hitherto I have been reckless of my fate. I almost prayed for death. Now that I have a mission to perform I hope Heaven may spare me from the coming carnage. Moggridge has just come to thank me for my mercy, to beg forgiveness and pledge his faith to me. He seems very penitent, but it may be assumed.

"Thank Heaven, my boy is safe. I was wise enough to keep the secret of his lodging-place in my own bosom. I shall reveal it to you, that you may be a friend to him if I should fall in this conflict. I ask you to be a guardian to him, for the sake of our old-time friendship and your love of Lena. I am called.

"I shall finish this before morning—the canonade has opened—it is unexpected—the enemy is advancing. If I should fall—"

The last words were scrawled very hastily, and the abrupt termination spoke suggestively to the young reader.

It brought to his imagination the wild confusion of a surprise, the thunder of guns, and above and through all the voice of the self-accusing writer giving forth commands.

(To be continued.)

THE MYSTERY OF FALKLAND TOWERS.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE courtyard of the madhouse was scarcely half a dozen feet below the window of Lady Florence's cell, and the man who proposed the rescue seemed to climb up and down the wall like a cat.

As soon as the decision of the captives was announced by Annette his head popped below the casement with the rapidity of thought. It speedily reappeared again, with the shoulders and arms belonging to it. He had some bright tools in his hands—little pincers and saws and centre-bits: and with these he instantly went to work upon the tough bars of the casement with the rapidity and noiselessness of a skilful hand. One after one they were loosened and silently passed in to Annette, who laid them softly upon the couch, and the passage to liberty and the rational world was free.

Lady Florence was first passed through and lowered into the court by the strong but respectful arm of the rough deliverer, Annette next.

"Follow me, and do not speak, as you value liberty and life!" muttered the man; and he silently led the way toward the wall at the lower extremity of the courtyard.

The wall was at least four yards high, but the rescuer reached its summit with the ease of a leopard's leap. One after another the escaped captives were dragged up and over the wall and lowered to the ground outside, their rescuer silently dropping down beside them.

But the fall to the marsh side had been so sudden and severe as to startle a slight scream from Florence; and their rough friend, with a low mutter of caution, drew them into the shadow of the wall.

He had scarcely done so before one of the armed keepers, who constantly kept guard around the madhouse, came running around the angle. He saw them in an instant, and was about to raise the alarm when the rescuer sprang upon him like a tiger, felling him to the earth and fastening his fingers upon his throat with a deadly grip.

The keeper tried to reach his weapons, and struggled with his limbs.

But the grip tightened upon his throat, slowly, slowly, but ever tightening, until the hideous strangulation was complete and all was still.

The two women had gazed, with unspeakable horror, upon this dreadful scene; and their deliverer hurried them away.

"Come!" he muttered, hoarsely; "come!"

And they mechanically followed him out into the mists of the desolate marsh.

"Oh, Heaven, sir," at length gasped Lady Florence, who appeared impelled forward by some supernatural agency rather than her own. "You must have killed that man!"

"Yes, yes!" was the dogged reply. "It's a bad job, but couldn't be helped. On, on! we haven't far to go."

Weakened by their cruel imprisonment, the strength of both Florence and her maid was fast failing them, and they knew not whether they were being led, but they bore up, and sped on.

At length the forms of some men and horses loomed up through the moon-silvered fog; and their guide gave a shout.

He had scarcely done so when two of the men started from the horses and ran towards them.

"Florence, Florence! Oh, Florence!" cried one of the men, with a wild, startling joy in his voice. "Florence!"

"Ralph! Oh, Ralph!" screamed poor Lady Florence, tottering forward, with stumbling steps and a reeling brain.

The next instant she swooned in the arms of Ralph Romney.

Almost at the same instant, but with far more healthful exclamations of greeting, little Annette was locked in the strong embrace of Doctor Gipsajoker.

When Florence awoke from her swoon, which was of brief duration, she found herself seated before her lover on horseback, and with her head pillow'd upon his broad chest.

She had suffered so much, the reaction of her present safety was so mighty, that she did not think of

lifting her head from its generous pillow, as she might have done under other circumstances.

"Where are you taking me to, dear Ralph?" she murmured, dreamily.

"Home, home! to love and life and safety. Oh, my beloved!" exclaimed Ralph, beside himself with rapture at the tone of endearment with which she addressed him.

His own tone recalled her to herself, and she would have raised her head and withdrawn her arms, but she was too weak to do so. So she remained as she was, and perhaps we can pardon her if she did so with a very comfortable resignation.

The horse was travelling over the spongy surface of the marsh with great speed.

Without lifting her head, but by merely turning her eyes, Lady Florence could see that the horseman nearest to them was Doctor Gipsajoker, with little Annette in his arms.

The latter, instead of taking affairs so sentimentally as her mistress, was having with her lover a very lively chat, in what was apparently the gipsy dialect.

Florence could see the rough form of her deliverer, also mounted, a little farther away; and from the heavy thud of hoofs directly behind and around she rightly conjectured that they were also accompanied by some of the mounted servants of the Romney estate.

"Why are all going at such a terrific rate of speed, Ralph?" murmured Lady Florence.

"Hush! it is nothing, dear!" he muttered, drawing the riding cloak, in which he had muffled her, still closer about her form.

"But why, I say?" she exclaimed, pettishly.

"Do not be alarmed," he replied, with some hesitation; "we are pursued."

"Pursued!"

In spite of his gentle effort to prevent her she now found strength enough to raise her head and look back over his shoulder.

They had passed the region of the denser mists, and the strong moonlight silvered everything.

Yes; scarcely a quarter of a mile in their rear thirty or forty horses were ploughing over the marsh. She could now hear their cries and see them madly lashing their horses' flanks.

"Ralph—are—they Lord Falkland's men in pursuit?" faltered Lady Florence, gazing into her lover's eyes.

"By no means, Florence. They all belong to that dreadful establishment from which we have happily torn you for ever. They often have to gallop after escaped prisoners, I have been told."

"Prisoners!" she said, still looking him in the eyes. "Aren't most of them mad people confined there?"

"Three-fourths of them confined there, I truly believe, are no more mad than were you!" he exclaimed, straining her still closer to his embrace.

But she persisted in looking back over his shoulder.

"Will they overtake us, Ralph?"

"Never!" he cried, with a laugh which contained and afforded a world of confidence.

"But, if my eyes do not deceive me, they are certainly gaining on us, Ralph."

"I don't doubt it, and would rather have it so," he replied; "for we are nearing that portion of the marsh between the little creek and my own estates, whose sloughs and ditches will give their inexperience sufficient trouble to make them turn back as soon as Providence will permit them. Ha!" he added, "here we are already! Hold hard for the wide leap at the creek, dear!"

The noble steeds rose at the leap almost simultaneously, passing over the other obstacles in the way with the utmost ease, they were so well acquainted with the marshes.

Numerous cries of dismay caused them to turn, when they beheld the pursuing party in decided disorder. Some half a dozen of the steeds had refused the leap at the edge of the creek, pitching their riders head foremost into the muddy shallows. Others were stuck fast or floundering desperately among little pits and trenches, with which the ground was beset; and it was very likely that, inasmuch as none of them would be able to make much headway, all would ultimately be compelled to return.

"Come," said Ralph Romney, "I think there is no fear of any farther pursuit."

And the party once more moved briskly on, but more leisurely than before.

"Do you not fear Lord Falkland will try and force me from your protection, dear Ralph?" said Lady Florence; and now, though she might have mustered sufficient strength to raise her head and withdraw her arms from encircling him, she did nothing of the kind—perhaps through an absence of mind, springing out of pure weariness.

"While I am in Romney Manor House, dear Flo-

rence, I do not fear the power of any noble in County Kent," said Ralph Romney, proudly. "I can muster enough yeomen to defend me successfully against all the ruffians Falkland can bring to the attack. At any rate, my own arm would be multiplied fifty fold in a fight for you."

They were a little in advance of the rest, and he seized the opportunity to bend his head, and imprint a passionate kiss upon her pale forehead.

She shrank a little and murmured a protest, but only prevented a repetition of the boldness by burying her face still deeper into his bosom, where it might blush unseen.

When she lifted it again a thrill of pleasure darted through her feeble frame; for they had quitted the marshes for the wooded lands, and she saw the little camp-fires of Mother Judith's gipsy encampment twinkling through the copse. But a sense of outer security, a sweetnes she had never known before, brushed her like the phantoms of a dream of peace, when, just at the gray of dawn, they swept up the noble avenue leading to Romney-Manor House.

"No," she murmured; "no, dear Ralph, I feel that even his vengeance will not pursue me here."

"Fear not that it will, dear Florence!" said he. And then he added, muttering, more as if speaking to himself: "To tell the truth, I scarcely believe that his lordship will speedily be informed of your escape. Those madhouse fellows will fear his vengeance so much they will be likely to keep it a secret as long as possible."

The best and most comfortable apartments in the Manor had been prepared in anticipation of the success of the rescue. To these Lady Florence and her maid were at once conducted by the genial old house-keeper, in whose immediate care they were placed. Medical attendance was at-hand, and everything in readiness to restore the sufferers to health and strength.

The recovery of the hardy Annette was effected very quickly, and she was enabled to devote herself once more to her mistress, whose restoration was necessarily much slower.

It was many days before she began to resume anything like her cheerfulness and beauty.

During this period she had many interviews with Ralph, which afforded him an opportunity of making explanations, as well as of making love, which latter it is needless to say he improved to the best of his ability.

He said that, directly after his restoration to his rights, through the medium of the unfortunate Captain Digges, imperative business had called him to London, where he had been detained many days, not dreaming that the wicked Baron of Falkland Towers would meditate any farther villany against his kinswoman. He had returned to Romney Manor with the intention of using the first opportunity to abduct her from the castle, when he was horror-stricken to learn that she had been found insane, and sent to the madhouse of the marsh. He immediately suspected that a foul trick had been played; and in this suspicion he was confirmed by Dr. Gipsajoker. The latter had also been to London, in an effort to do something for his unfortunate kinsman, Captain Digges, of tiger-slaying and other fame. Together with the doctor (who luckily still retained the confidence of the conspirators at the castle) he had immediately got up a hasty party, from among his own yeomen, to effect her rescue. They had accordingly proceeded, armed to the teeth, to the madhouse vicinity, determining, if necessary, to force the superintendent to surrender the keys of the cells, and go through the entire bedlam until they should find the object of their search. While deliberating upon the marsh they had fallen in with the poor fellow who had effected his own release, and the result was as has been narrated.

"But why, Ralph, have you not informed my god-father, the Earl of Glenmorgan, of the horrible treatment to which I have been subjected?" exclaimed Florence. "Be sure he has the will and power to wreak a terrible vengeance upon Falkland."

"Undoubtedly he has, dear Florence; but at present he is upon a government mission in Belgium. He will, however, in a week or ten days be in London, where he will find such letters from me awaiting him that will bring him down here, like a gust of wind."

"And the poor man who effected our release so cleverly? Murder-stained as he is, and as I must ever shudder at it, it was probably necessary."

"It was necessary, Florence, and I hold the man as morally, even legally, guiltless. Be assured that I have not failed to provide for him."

"And Doctor Gipsajoker?"

"He spends most of his time at the castle, where he improves every opportunity to strengthen their erroneous belief that you are still being rapidly driven to insanity in the madhouse."

At length, when Lady Florence had almost tho-

roughly regained her health, she astonished her lover by hinting that it was about time for her to think of returning.

"Is the name of common sense, what for?" exclaimed Romney, in supreme surprise. "Are you not being treated well enough here?"

"Yes, Ralph, yes," she stammered, blushingly.

"But—it is not proper that a young lady of my birth should longer remain the guest of Romney Manor. Indeed, I know how utterly honourable you are—I know there is really nothing wrong in it—but it will be long before commented upon—and you can appreciate my feelings."

"But no one knows that you are here except my own tenants and domestics," persisted Ralph; "and they will not fail to preserve the silence I have enjoined them to; and I have made a point to receive no visits from the surrounding gentry during your residence here."

"Still, Ralph," said Lady Florence, in a determined spirit, "it is not right that I should longer remain."

"Promise at least to remain until the arrival of the earl—it cannot be a week hence!" he pleaded.

"Well, I will do that much, and then, of course, I go to London."

"And then—oh, Florence!" exclaimed Romney, catching her hand—"then, with the permission of your godfather—I have already your consent—an arrangement can be made by which you can remain for ever under my roof-tree without any impropriety whatever!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

If I shall be condemned
Upon submises—all proofs sleeping else—
But what your jealousies await, I tell you—
"Terror and not law." —Shakespeare.

We must once more return to the unashamed inmates of Falkland Towers, at a period but a few days after the infamous abduction of Lady Florence.

Falkland and Madame La-Grande had a dim, vague apprehension that the return of the Earl of Glenmorgan might make trouble with their plans, but otherwise they felt pretty secure.

"We have got effectually rid of that knave, Digges," chuckled his lordship; "and he was the wort for we had."

"And her sweet little ladyship is in the madhouse of the marsh!" chuckled the amiable La Grande. "Even if the earl should come, we can't fearfully take to that pleasant and quiet institution, and point to the miserable wreck in mind and body which was once his beautiful god-daughter. Doctor Gipsajoker assures me that she is already almost as mad as a March hare—tearing her golden locks, beating her little head against her prison bars, and screeching like the most perfect type of insanity in the world. I would go over to enjoy the delicate change myself were it not that the stench of the cells is beyond endurance."

"Yes," murmured his lordship, with a thoughtful smile, "and what a pretty disposition I made of that fellow, George Grindle, the brother of the brutal murderer of my lamented uncle, the deceased Baron of Falkland Towers! Ha, ha! You must give in that I got ahead of even you there, dear Bella. The quicksands of the shore are fathomless, and hold a secret well. Hawkes told me that the carriage was stopped but for an instant to heave the man in the deeps, neck and heels, and then away it drove, in the most innocent way in the world. And Hawkes—poor little Hawkes!—how quickly the rats of the charnel disposed of him! You should have heard his yell, Bella—they would have been dance music to your ears!"

"They—the rats I mean—must have been hungry enough, too," chimed in La Grande; "for it was nearly a week before that when they made meal of that dear, good, prime old creature, Jane Richards. I saw her body carried to the vaults myself!"

"Yes, and the Hon. Percy Redesdale, as he called himself, I gave him a good dose for attempting to betray me. It was't a week after his being nabbed in the parlour of Falkland House before he was under the French guillotine!"

"But the Romney estates, my dear?" said the woman, with the fiendish mockery she could so well assume.

"Curse you! Why do you always twit me with that failure?" exclaimed his lordship, angrily, springing to his feet. "You were as much duped by Digges as I was; and are just as much to blame for the loss of the big swag as I."

"Perhaps so!" was the rejoicing sneer. "But then how about the lost casket of family jewels, which was to be my wedding portion?"

"Isn't that the present business in hand? The six months in which the old gipsy, Mother Judith, promised to produce the jewels are already nearly up. I have her watched constantly; and now, with the

help of this crack detective, who is coming from London, we cannot fail to find the casket."

"Have you ever met this new detective-officer you expect from London?" said Madame La-Grande, her brow becoming troubled with thought.

"Never; but he is sent to me as the best detective in the service. Gad! he has the reputation of being a regular human ferret, who can crawl through a key-hole like a flea."

"What is his name?"

"Walter Weasel—why do you ask?"

"For more curiosity," said the other, her brow clearing a little. "And you propose to set him upon this Mother Judith at once?"

"Like a rattlesnake on a pigeon!"

"Do so; and when we've made use of her leave her to me!"

"What do you want of her?"

"Only her life!" said the bad woman, with her peculiar smile of evil softness.

"Bella!" exclaimed his lordship, angrily. "I have often noticed how you avoid the old woman of late, and you afford me no satisfaction as to the cause."

"Why should I? You have your own secrets of the past as well as I. This woman possesses one of mine, and bides her hour to destroy me. I must anticipate that hour by destroying her. Isn't it fair?"

"I suppose so," growled his lordship, "only I don't see what right you have to keep any secrets from me."

"Come," said she, quaffing pleasantly; "let us have an end to this moody talk, and seek the society of our merry friends."

A new batch of guests had been brought from London soon after the disposition made of poor Florence.

They were of a keeping with those that have been already described, adventurers of both sexes and of several grades, but all gay, reckless, well dressed, and ready enough to join in any extravagant festivities which the wealth of Lord Falkland would afford.

Altogether, they made a great scandal in the neighbourhood, which is the home of some of the best nobility and gentry of the United Kingdom.

Their fox-hunting was wild gallops over hill, dale and moor.

Their riding-parties were the terror of the peasantry, whose males were frequently beaten black and blue with flourished riding-whips, and whose females were always insulted by the application of the worst and coarsest insults, or still worse complications.

Their shooting parties were the constant fright of the attendant gamekeepers, who were as likely to become the marks of the reckless houndsmen as the game itself.

Their balls and parties, which followed each other nightly, began with vulgar ceremony and ended in the most utter abandonment and debauchery.

Even the servants of the castle, who were themselves rascals and low adventurers, the creatures of his lordship, were completely terrorized with the hammerings they received from jewelled flits, and many of them fled the place in fear of life and limb.

The Countess of Arundel had heretofore reigned supreme at such entertainments, but now she had many a rival, as wild, reckless, and brazen as herself.

Lady Fins-Grasmont and the detestable Miss Felicia were completely cast in the shade.

Hugo Withers and the lisping Sir Plantagenet de Vavassour had suffered so much competition that several fistful encounters on the castle lawn had been the result.

It was "Castle Squander" on a large scale, and a revival of the rollicking days of the Earl of Rochester.

Upon the occasion of one of these free entertainments a few evenings after the conversation above referred to as occurring between his lordship and Madame La-Grande, and when the festivities were approaching their scandalous climax, one of the servants sought out Lord Falkland in the ballroom, and announced a new visitor by handing him a large, pretentious card bearing the words:

"WALTER WEASEL, Detective,

"London."

His lordship read the card in an audible voice, and, as a number of his older guests had been apprised of the expected arrival, they crowded around him.

His lordship pointed the servant to an elegant ante-chamber a little off the main ballroom, and bade him conduct the distinguished visitor within.

"The gentleman must be weary of his journey at this late hour," said Falkland, who, despite his exalted rank, had an overpowering respect for detectives. "Entertain him with the best we have, and tell him I shall be with him shortly."

The servant bowed and retired.

As the dance was resumed, however, he signalled Madame La Grande, the countess, and three or four others to accompany him to the room.

They found Mr. Walter Weasel seated at a small, well-loaded table, refreshing himself with a relish which denoted an excellent appetite.

He arose as his lordship entered, bowed very politely, received his introductions to the ladies and others, and then, resuming his seat, set to once more at his food and wine.

"Excuse me for just a few moments, my lord. I excuse me, ladies and gentlemen!" said he, smiling over some Madeira, and holding a forkful of lobster salad in one hand. "I am almost famished, and cannot possibly do any business until I refresh myself slightly. I only want a mere bite, and half a glass of wine—no more."

Mr. Weasel's "mere bite" and half-a-glassful of wine amounted in reality to a feast washed down by two bottles of Madeira. When he had finished he crossed his legs, and, regarding his lordship and company as if he were their host, said, abruptly, in a quick, squeaking voice:

"If your lordship is ready for that private conversation, I am ready to talk with those concerned, and with no others."

(To be continued.)

LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

CHAPTER XXXI.

At the very moment when the wronged young Lady Chetwynd stole like a shadow into her husband's house at Chetwynd Park, and crept up to a lonely attic to don her ghostly robes, in which she believed she might steal to her husband's very side, and still pass for a spectre or an illusion—at that moment Lord Chetwynd and Sylvia Monk were alone together in the music room.

"Shall you always be so wrapped up in one who is dead?" asked Sylvia, with sudden emotion. Her face growing pale with anger. "Bernice gave you to me when she was dying. I love you, boy, with all my heart and soul. Will you always trample on that love? Bernice, in her best days, never gave you the passionate devotion I lay at your feet—never. No one ever loved you as I love you. And what is my reward? You are always talking to me of her. You treat me as if I were your sister, instead of your betrothed wife. You—you haven't kissed me since the night of your return home—the night you asked me to marry you—and even then I begged the caress. I give you everything; you give me nothing. Is this just or right?"

He moved towards her under the impulse of tender pity, and took her in his arms.

And just then a light, soft step came noiselessly along the flower-bordered aisles of the great conservatory, and approached the door of the music room whence the sound of voices issued.

The new comer was Bernice, in her silken burial robes.

All unconscious of the near proximity of the young wife whose death he mourned so despairingly, Lord Chetwynd bent in pitying affection above the false-hearted being who had wrought him so much of woe, and whom he was promised to marry.

"My poor Sylvia!" said his lordship, still with the pitying tenderness that filled his heart. "I will try for your dear sake to bury the dead just out of my sight. We belong to each other doubly, having been twice betrothed. But for you I should be indeed desolate. I love you, Sylvia, and I will be to you a good husband, tender and true. I shall be proud of your beauty; I shall love you for yourself, and we will grow old together as loving a Darby and Jean as can be found in all England. I shall have in you a magnificent bride indeed—one worthy to bear the name of Chetwynd. Kiss me, darling."

He uttered almost mechanically the pet name by which he had loved to call his lost young wife, and its utterance smote the ear of that listening wife like a knell. He lowered his fair and noble head to the swarthy face on his breast, and kissed Sylvia. She returned the caress rapturously with interest, calling him fond names, and telling him how she loved him.

Poor Bernice stood transfixed. Ah, indeed, she thought, her place was filled. The pet names she had borne were given to another. The caresses that had thrilled her loving soul were lavished now upon Sylvia.

Forgotten! The cruel word stammered her writhing soul like a burning brand. Forgotten! Supposed to be in her grave, while yet she was living. Better she had died.

She looked at the pair wildly, and a low, smothered cry burst from her white lips.

Chetwynd heard the faint sound, and turned and beheld her.

For a moment he too stood transfixed. Then with a wild cry he dropped Sylvia from his hold, as if she had been some inanimate thing, and bounded towards the seeming spectre.

Bernice fled before him like a vision.

Miss Monk caught a glimpse of the white robe, the whiter face framed in masses of floating dusky hair, and with a shriek came rushing with nimous sweep into the conservatory.

Bernice flew on down the long flowery aisle, her eyes fixed upon the distant open door. She was light and fleet. She sped on before Chetwynd like a shining meteor. At the junction of another aisle she tripped and stumbled upon a misplaced flowerpot. Chetwynd now gained on her. Her breathing sounded hoarsely in her ears. Her panic increased. She could not see the way before her. She stumbled again—and now Chetwynd reached out his hand to grasp her. She was away again like a flash, but he had caught the lace frills of her short elbow sleeves in his hand, and the yellow film gave way and remained in his clutch, while she flew on and out at the open door.

He was at the door at the next instant, but the seeming spectre had disappeared. There was a faint starlight, and he could trace the forms of the clumps of trees and shrubbery dotting the lawn, but the shining vision was nowhere in sight.

With swift, undulating movement Miss Monk returned to the music room, and there proceeded to her own apartment.

She found the East Indian woman crouching before her boudoir fire.

She told her briefly what had occurred and enjoined her to an absolute caution and silence.

"Leave it all to me, missy," said the Hindoo. "My lady shall not trouble you after to-night. I think she is gone up to the attics to change her gown. I will go and search for her. Go back to my lord with an easy heart, missy. After to-night no ghost will haunt Chetwynd Park."

The old woman spoke with sensible measure which her mistress fully understood.

The Hindoo went into the dressing-room and unlocked the Indian cabinet, extracting several articles from the secret drawers within.

Then, with the face of a starting demon, the East Indian woman concealed the articles in her bosom and stole away out of the room and over stealthily up to the attics.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Miss Monk paused to take a sip of her soothing draught, and then set out on her return to the music room.

In the hall just outside her door she encountered her brother, who was in dressing-gown and slippers, and appeared just aroused from slumber.

"What's the row, Sylvia?" he asked. "What does all this snarling up and down about mean? What has happened?"

"Nothing—nothing," cried Miss Monk, with an eagerness that aroused his suspicions that something was wrong. "I came up to my room for a piece of music. Go back to bed, Gilbert. I must return to the marquis, who is waiting for me."

She moved away as she spoke, and hastened to descend the stairs.

Mr. Monk, being very astute upon occasion, whistled softly and went back to his room, drew on his coat and boots, and also hurried down to the music room.

At this moment there was a sound of hurried footsteps in the conservatory, and Lord Chetwynd rushed into the room, pale, wild and disordered.

Monk leaped to his feet in amazement.

The marquis looked past him with a wandering gaze.

"Has she been back?" demanded Chetwynd. "I have missed her."

"Who?" cried both Sylvia and Gilbert Monk, in a breath, the former pale, the latter eager.

"Bernice—my wife! Did she come back this way?" repeated Chetwynd. "Heaven! Have I lost her again?"

"Ah, has the spectre appeared to you again, my lord?" questioned Monk, his face flaming. "Has the ghost been here?"

"Yes. Bernice came and looked in upon us; as Sylvia and I stood yonder. She sighed or moaned, and the sound went to my soul. I saw her face and it was pale and sorrowful, yet glorious in its beauty and loveliness. Sylvia saw it also."

"No, no, I saw no ghost!"

Chetwynd turned upon Sylvia a look of amazement.

"What am I to think?" cried Lord Chetwynd, his pale face growing paler still. "You looked at the spot where she stood, and you did not see her! Why, she ran along the conservatory, and I heard her light footfalls. She tripped upon a flower pot left in the path. I was so near to her as I am to you. I reached out my arm to grasp her—and I caught this!"

He unclosed his clenched hand and displayed a

fragment of point lace, yellow and wrinkled and stained, with jagged edges, just as he had torn it from Bernice's sleeve.

Gilbert Monk and Sylvia stared appalled.

Both stood dumb, not knowing what to say.

Chetwynd laid the scrap of lace flat upon his hand.

"The mystery shall soon be solved," said his lordship. "I have at least something tangible to work upon. So long as I supposed that I was dealing with the supernatural—and what else could I think?—I was helpless. But this fragment of lace proves that my visitor is living, and I intend to know who she is. The mystery shall be probed to the bottom. At present I know not what to think, and I shall summon assistance in the solution of the affair. I shall need your help also, Gilbert. I shall telegraph to Scotland Yard in the morning for a skilled detective to be sent down immediately."

Monk changed colour, and his heart beat more quickly.

"I shall keep the identity of the detective a profound secret between ourselves. I will not even entrust the telegram to a servant, and I shall beg you, Gilbert, to take it over to Eastbourne and transmit it yourself."

"I shall be glad to be of service to you, Chetwynd. Command me in any way you please. I will set out at daybreak, if you like. And the better to conceal my errand from the household here, I'll walk over to Chetwynd-by-the-Sea, and there fly at the inn there."

Lord Chetwynd nodded, and drew out his notebook and wrote a message upon a loose sheet, addressing it to the superintendent at Scotland Yard, London.

He gave this into Monk's hands, enjoining him to despatch it at an early hour of the morning, and then withdrew.

"There's trouble already" muttered Monk, when he was in his own apartments; "I'd give ten years of life to know where that girl is now."

Unable to sleep, he made a tour of the attics, but without success.

Toward morning he returned to his own room, and soon after daybreak he left the house and set out on his walk to the neighbouring village.

It was broad daylight when he entered the inn yard, and a stable boy came forward to meet him.

"I want to fly to take me to Eastbourne," said Monk, abruptly. "How soon can you have it ready?"

"There's one here now ready to start, sir," replied the boy, "which it belongs to Eastbourne, and brought over a lady all woe veiled last night. The lady got out up the stairs, and told the driver to come here and wait for her, but she have give up the slip, and hasn't been nigh on since. And the driver are ravin' mad because he's to get no pay for the return trip."

"Ah!" said Monk. "I'll go back with him. The lady has given him the slip, has she? Is the fly ready to start this moment?"

The stable-boy replied in the affirmative, and conducted Monk into the stable yard, where the vehicle in question was in waiting.

The driver was buckling a last strap and swearing at his horses.

Arrived at Eastbourne Monk sent his telegram and waited for an answer.

He inspected all the passengers who departed in the morning train, but there was no one who could be mistaken for young Lady Chetwynd.

"The question resolves itself into two points," he thought, at last. "Bernice is still at Chetwynd Park in hiding. Or else she has been killed by the Hindoo. I'll search every room in the Park afresh. Great Heaven! the detective must not come here and find her!"

He engaged a hansom cab and set out on his return to Chetwynd Park, arriving home soon after the nine-o'clock breakfast. He had his repast alone, and subsequently an interview in the library with Chetwynd, after which he went up to his sister's rooms.

Ragee was in attendance upon her mistress, but the Hindoo woman's head was bound up in her turban as in a bandage, and there were plasters on her face. She walked lame also, and Monk leaped to the conclusion that she had had a personal conflict with some one—probably with Bernice.

He regarded the woman keenly, and detected a shuddering rage in her steely eyes, and he knew by that tiger's look that Ragee had found her victim.

He went out from Miss Monk's rooms full of fears and tremblings, and muttered, as he stole again to the lonely attics:

"Ragee found Bernice—that is clear. She must have killed her. But if the girl escaped her fangs, she's in hiding somewhere now, and I must get her away before the detective officer comes. What if he were to find her? Once get her safely out of the way, and I can defy him. My tracks are covered."

(To be continued.)



[THE BROKEN TROTH.]

BARBARA'S GOLD HOOPS.

BARBARA knew that it was mean, and she hesitated.

Poor, pretty, weak Barbara, she hesitated. The solid gold hoops with their neat chasing—sterling, like all David Channing's tastes—looked very tempting as they lay upon the white velvet lining of the morocco case. Barbara, standing before her glass, lifted one to her ear, then let it swing and dangle a minute against her cheek. How pretty they were! how pretty she herself was! And what a pleasure it was to ornament her own beauty that day.

It was mean, she knew, to wear David Channing's gift in order to render herself the more attractive in the eyes of his rival. She felt a slight self-contempt, a still slighter dread of Hannah's scorn, a faint rebuke for her course toward her old lover. It cost her a pang to gratify her vanity. But she could not deny herself its gratification. She stood before her little mirror, dressed for the excursion, and hesitated.

"Are you ready, Barbara? I hope you are not going to keep us waiting to day," said a clear, sharp woman's voice from the entry below.

Hannah Wylder was past thirty, plain, punctual, practical, with no manner of sympathy for the shortcomings of her pretty sister.

"I am coming," said Barbara, anxious to propitiate in small things when she was going to be so very naughty in large ones.

The gold hoops slipped in, almost without her consent as it were. She folded her gay striped shawl and ran lightly downstairs.

"What is going to happen, Barbara, that you are ready in time?" Hannah volunteered.

Barbara stood in the doorway, fair and sparkling as the summer morning. A great deal was going to happen, had she been but wise enough to foresee it.

She saw Channing among the excursionists, disposing of baskets, assisting one and another

to their places, making himself master of ceremonies, and from time to time stealing an anxious, impatient glance towards the porch where Barbara's gold hoops glittered in the morning sun.

As she stood there, with her air of coquetry, there came a cloud of dust and a spinning of wheels along the lower road, at the sight of which her giddy heart beat faster. Presently out of the cloud emerged an elegant phaeton, a pair of spirited horses and Mr. Francis Lovel's dashing person—the whole drawing up with ostentation before the gate.

Hannah Wylder's quick perceptions had taken in this little episode.

"Aren't you going with the rest of us, Barbara?" she asked, in a quick, displeased way.

"If I am not, you will be spared the annoyance of having to wait for me."

"But you don't mean—you are not going with him, and alone?"

"Do you suppose he is a bear, and that he will eat me alive if I do?"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself! And Channing going to sail to-morrow!"

"So much the more reason why I should look out for another beau," answered saucy Barbara.

Hannah smothered her indignation, for Mr. Lovel was close at hand, drawing off his driving-glove and displaying his rings, while he bowed and smiled.

"Pray, Miss Wylder, allow me to help you with that groaning basket. I think you have not counted upon the lovers of our party—who are not supposed to possess appetites," he said, with a smile toward Barbara.

"We commonly have enough to eat, and clear consciences to eat it with, Mr. Lovel," responded Hannah. "No, thank you, I can carry my own basket."

"I have endeavoured to procure a four-seat carriage, but unsuccessfully, so I can do myself the pleasure of driving but one of you ladies," said Mr. Lovel.

Hannah's look answered, "If you had a twenty-seat carriage you would not drive me, sir," and she marched onward with her well-laden basket, leaving Barbara and Mr. Lovel to conclude their arrangement for a tête-à-tête by whispers and looks.

Just as she reached the square the phaeton whirled by.

"An advance guard," Mr. Lovel called out, leaning forward and nodding complacently.

Barbara shrank back involuntarily. She closed her eyes. But even so she felt David Channing's face, deadly pale, with flaming, heart-sick eyes, as he saw what had come to pass.

"This is something to live for," said Mr. Lovel, as he slackened his horses' speed at the end of half a mile. "The air is intoxicating. It seems to me I never before saw so brilliant a sky, so blue a sea, nor, Barbara, so pretty a woman."

"Nevertheless, you have seen all three before."

"Not with just the same eyes that I see them with now."

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Lovel?"

"I will tell you. Until to-day I have looked at these three things, which seem so fair to me, with jaundiced, jealous eyes. To-day the jaundice is gone. Do you know why, Barbara?"

"How should I? I did not even know it was there."

"You must have known how jealous I have been of this great captain who dogs your steps so," said Mr. Lovel.

"I don't know why you should be jealous, nor why you should cease to be," spoke Barbara, who had an adroitness of her own.

"You have given him his quietus, this morning, by driving off with me," replied her companion, concisely.

Barbara coloured and frowned.

"If so many interpretations are to be put upon my conduct I am sorry I came."

"Are you indeed, Barbara? Are you sorry to make me happy—so very happy? And, as for this big captain, what was the use in prolonging his misery? He could never expect to win and wear so pretty a girl as you."

"I don't like to be flattered at any one else's expense," said Barbara. "I don't like to give pain."

"My dear girl, I don't suppose there is any keen pleasure in this world which does not have its counterpoising pain. Would you like it all back, if you could, and miss what we are now enjoying?" and Francis Lovel looked with his seductive eyes straight into Barbara's.

"I am not always quite sure of my own decisions when I am with you," faltered Barbara. "What you say seems right while I listen. Sometimes, in thinking it over—" and she stopped.

It was quite safe to slip his arm about her as they drove slowly along the lonely road, a mile or more in advance of the others.

"I will tell you about that, darling. It is because you look at things from such a narrow standpoint. When you see the world from my sphere you will judge as I do."

"You persuade me in spite of myself," whispered he.

Then Francis Lovel ventured a little farther. He bent and pressed his lips, his silky brown moustache, to Barbara's cheek for the first time.

"If I have only persuaded you to love me—have I, Barbara?"

"I cannot help loving you," she confessed.

And then they drove onward in eloquent silence close together, side by side, unmindful of the sparkling morning, the salt, eager air, the far-off boom of the breakers.

It would have suited them well if the ride had had no ending. But end it did, when the sandy road terminated in the broad expanse of glittering beach against whose shifting ledges the breakers reared and broke, ploughing deeper furrows in the ridged sands, or spreading swiftly and smoothly to their limits, to ebb again, sucked in by a towering wall of water.

It was high noon, and the shore was gay with the excursion party, some wandering in quest of shells, venturing to the tide mark at the peril of wet feet; others perched on sandy summits, content to watch the old yet ever-new panorama. Others, among them Hannah Wylder, were arranging the picnic dinner, in their estimation the most important feature.

In fact, the repast looked by no means unpalatable. There were a long row of viands; hams garnished with white fringed paper; cold chickens of an even golden brown; sandwiches, berry pies, brown bread, pats of yellow butter, and cakes whose name was legion—cakes black and solid, bristling with citron and odorous of spice; cakes white and spongy, interlaid with quivering jellies; cakes marbled, cakes iced—all the varieties known to ambitious housewives for grand occasions.

But even Hannah Wylder was a little absent-

minded as she bustled about in her element. Captain Channing was tending the fire, whose flames needed perpetual fanning. The kettle had been skilfully brought to the "singing" point, when Hannah observed him with his eyes straying vacantly away, and the green sticks in a state of fierce and furious smoulder.

"Why," she cried, "what on earth are you thinking about? That water 'll be smoky, sure as you live."

"Hannah, I was thinking of two years ago to-day—the last time we were all down here," he said, in a low tone.

There was one soft spot in Hannah Wylder's heart, and this big bronzed captain had always filled it.

She forgot her kettle, which sang fainter and fainter as the sticks smouldered and smoked more fiercely. She laid her hand on Channing's shoulder.

"She isn't worth fretting for, David," was her abrupt consolation.

"She is everything to me, Hannah."

"Then that's your cross to lose her. And I can tell you the loss will be your gain."

He winced.

"If I thought the man was worth her I could bear it better. But he is a stranger to us all."

"There is no use talking. I've talked my breath away, but I couldn't hold her. If mother had lived it might have been different. But then I've been her mother. She has as good a right to head me as any," said Hannah, ruefully.

"Hannah, make me a promise before I go away. Be tender to her, and lenient with her, whatever comes, for my sake."

"David, she is my own sister, my own child, as it were, but I tell you, if you value your own peace of mind, to forget her."

"I can't do that."

Looking up at this moment, David Channing saw Barbara coming slowly towards them. He immediately rose up and advanced to meet her. Her pretty face was a study of penitence and defiance, triumph and shame.

"You are always doing good works, David," she said, pointing to the flickering flame darting upward among the smouldering sticks, the reward of his exertions.

"I should not judge that anything I did seemed good to you, Barbara. You avoid me as if I were evil."

"I don't avoid you, David," pursued Barbara, in her demure, parauous tones. "I shall always love you, if you will let me, as my best friend."

He looked shocked. Even yet he was not prepared to have her withdraw her sacred betrothal pledge so concisely.

"Do you mean that you want to give me up as a lover, Barbara?" he asked, almost sternly.

"David, I want to do right. I am so troubled. I cannot help what has come. Don't make things harder for me than they are," and Barbara's lovely eyes and dewy lips pleaded for her as though she were more sinned against than sinning.

"I only want to understand you," he said, gloomily.

"Dear David, I could not have made you happy. I am too giddy, some way, and frivolous. Forget that you ever wanted to marry me. Just remember how we were boy and girl together, and all except the last two years. I want to undo them as far as I can. I want to give you back!"

"Hush, Barbara, for Heaven's sake. How can you talk in this way?"

"You know you are going to-morrow," she faltered.

"Yes, I am going to-morrow for three years. When I come back I will take my gifts and truth back."

"You do not mean that you hold me in honour bound?" she asked, in a half-frightened tone.

He looked at her with sickened, piteous eyes a minute.

"Bound?" he said, abruptly. "No. Nothing has ever bound you but your own promise—a rope of sand. But hearken, Barbara. You've no father or brother. You don't know much about menfolks—unless it's me and him. I suppose you know something about him. But let me tell you you must know more, or you'll run the day you ever saw him. What is he but a stranger—a three weeks' acquaintance? And yet he carries off your heart from me. Tush! don't cry, girl."

"You are scolding me," she sobbed.

He hushed the gruff, excited tone in which he had been speaking.

"I want to talk with you, Barbara, as—your best friend. I want to tell you that it is important for you to know something more about Mr. Francis Lovel than he himself can explain. Find out that he is an honest man, that he has a right to love you, that he can take care of you when you are his. When you know these things not your will without regard to me."

Mr. Lovel joined Barbara before her eyes were fairly dry.

"Are you crying because you cannot have the old love and the new love too? he asked, too confident to be jealous.

"No," said Barbara; "but Hannah and Captain Channing fret me with their suspicions."

"Suspicions of me, Barbara?"

"Yes."

"Their suspicions are perfectly justified, my little girl," he said, "and I am somewhat to blame in not placing myself beyond them. But I had the weakness of a man of the world, a longing to be loved for myself, regardless of my social value. I have had manifold experiences, Barbara. My faith has been sorely shaken and tried. I did not know that it could live again as it does in my love for you. You are so fresh, so simple, so beautiful. I almost wonder at my own temerity in wooing you. I almost tremble at the thought of transplanting you, of teaching you to know the world and the hard part which worldlings have to play. I shrink from looking at the future, because the present is so full of bliss. If life could only be one long summer dream—like the last three weeks."

"You yourself destroy the dream with such foreboding," she replied. "What are you afraid of—that I shall not make you happy?"

"Barbara," he asked, abruptly, "how old do you suppose I am?"

"Oh, perhaps half as old as Methuselah," she said, between smiles and pouts.

"I am thirty-five. And you are nineteen."

"How tragical you make it sound."

"How tragical it may some day seem."

"You are decidedly out of sorts, Mr. Lovel. I cannot say that I feel flattered."

A call to dinner interrupted the conversation. At the table Mr. Lovel regained his spirits. He had that perfect breeding which sets every one at ease, which assumes nothing, and yet by its own power controls all.

He was full of light, pleasant talk, of those delicate attentions to Barbara—the flattery of a man to a child—which he had laid aside during the preceding ten minutes for the first time in their acquaintance. In short he was the hero of the hour.

Barbara was as happy as she dared to be under David Channing's eyes; and Hannah, determined as she was to dislike Mr. Lovel, could scarcely help admiring him.

To her surprise he came to her as soon as the repast was ended.

"Miss Wylder," he said, "I must beg a few moments' conversation with you. I have presumed upon your hospitality and trespassed upon your confidence. Your lack of favour is not undeserved. Now the time has come when I may perhaps set myself right with you. Your sister has given me her young pure heart. Of you I ask her hand. I do not expect you to grant it until I have convinced you that I am at least not unworthy of it."

He offered his arm, which Hannah declined, walking nevertheless by his side, as he led the way from the crowd, along the sands, towards where the afternoon mist was shutting down like a visor over the brilliant vision of the lucid midday.

"I came to your quiet town, Miss Wylder," Mr. Lovel began, "for a month's rest—rest of body and soul. For I have passed through wearing vicissitudes during the past year. I am thirty-five years old, and since I left college at twenty-three have been my own master, accountable to and dependent upon myself. I began the world ambitiously. I meant to be a rich man. I mixed in society, but with no thought of loving or marrying. My profession for ten years was my sole mistress, and my constancy was rewarded with considerable success. About that time—some two years ago—I formed the acquaintance of a lady for whom I conceived an admiration I had never felt before. She was brilliant, queenly, commanding, apparently above my hopes; and yet I won her affection. We were betrothed. Neither of us, however, desired to marry until my position should be somewhat farther advanced. Our engagement had lasted rather more than a year when my jealousy became aroused by the persistence of my betrothed in receiving the attentions of a wealthy foreigner. Disputes and reconciliations grew frequent between us. At last one day, in a quarrel more angry than the rest, she broke her engagement, and from that moment gave herself up to my rival's attentions, and it was speedily announced that they were to be married.

"At this time there came to me a summons from a distant and eccentric relative to attend his dying hours.

"My surprise was immense to find myself, at his death, heir to a vast property whose existence was hitherto unknown to me. My inheritance involved me in a long and troublesome litigation which was recently decided in my favour. In the meanwhile I kept the circumstance of unlooked-for for-

tune a profound secret. You are the first person to whom I have confided it. At the termination of my lawsuit I determined upon a brief respite of toil and care. I came here, heart-sick, disgusted, feeling my luck and my success to be equal failures. I met your sister. I need not dwell upon the charm which her beauty and freshness wrought upon me. I renewed the fervour and faith of my youth. I believed again in humanity. Now I ask you to allow me, by a lifetime of devotion and indulgence, to repay her for what she has done for me. I hope you will pardon this long story, Miss Wylder. I feel that you have a right to my confidence, and that it will be sacred with you."

It must be confessed that Hannah was mollified by Mr. Lovel's story. It is doubtful whether her reply contained the whole truth she felt.

"We were not reared for any higher places than we fill. I doubt whether people are happier for getting above their level. That, however, is their own lookout, and if Barbara is to marry a rich man I hope she'll have grace given her to spend his money wisely."

"You will consent, then, to give her to me?" said Mr. Lovel.

"You can give me proofs, I daresay, of all you have said?"

"Undoubtedly."

"I've no more to say then. Barbara will please herself," and Miss Wylder turned about toward where the packing of the dishes claimed her care.

* * * * *

A month had passed since the excursion. Captain Channing had sailed. Mr. Lovel had gone. The summer was past; the harvest was ended, and no one in the town had any particular business except their neighbours', which they attended to diligently.

In Miss Wylder's home the front rooms—where Barbara's drama had been mainly played; where David Channing had come and gone restlessly, and seldom failed to find Francis Lovel before him; where Barbara had felt the flush and triumph of superior homage; where she had studied her own fair features with fresh interest, and where she had daily deposited fragrant flowers and sung songs from her light heart—these rooms were closed for their winter rest; darkened, curtained, shrouded in muslin nets and paper bags, while the sisters pursued their routine life in the sunny and tidy kitchen.

It was a very bright life for Barbara, despite its lack of excitement.

She had a brief past and a boundless future to dream over.

To Hannah also this season was full of interest. By day and by night she was planning the most amiable "setting out" she could give Francis Lovel's bride.

Like a mother conjuring Christmas gifts for a surprise, she stole away to look over her precious hoards—the fine homespun linens, the faded crepe shawls and India silks; the small thin silver spoons and egg-shell chains which had belonged to a generation of seafaring Wylders, and been handed down intact to the maiden sisters.

And while Hannah planned and Barbara dreamed, and the gossips chatted over the romance, and boded an ill ending for the heartless beauty, and picked out another mate for David Channing far away, and while Mr. Lovel's frequent letters and not unfrequent gifts came duly, and the gold hoops lay shut in their velvet cushion of the bronzed case, the winter came and wore away, and the coy spring coaxed a certain greenness in the grassy plots and late buds in the low-limbed oaks, and the sun gained mastery over the gray sea-mist in which it had wrestled and gone out day by day through all the winter long, and the Wylder homestead was astir with preparation for a visit from Francis Lovel.

A good many times through the winter Hannah had asked her sister "Doesn't he say anything about coming to see you?" and Barbara would answer "No," a little crossly.

Of course it was not her place to ask him to come, and whether he sought to test her, or to test himself, by absence, is not to be told, but anyhow he stayed away.

But now at last he was coming—this month, this week.

It only remained for him to fix the exact day, and Barbara expected a letter by this afternoon's mail which would decide the point.

She was impatient and restless after dinner. It seemed to her she could never wait there at home till four o'clock, when the mail was due.

"I believe I will walk out to Katie Cutting's," she said to her sister. "It is a long time since I have been there."

"Very well. It is a nice day for the walk," Hannah answered, so absorbed in her cambric ruffling that it was a wonder she knew that the day was "nice."

Barbara started blithely upon her walk. The air was keen, in spite of the sunshine which looked so warm and bright. She wrapped her warm shawl closer about her, glancing at the town-clock as she passed. It was just two o'clock. The walk of two miles, the visit with Katie, and the return, would consume the time which appeared so long.

Katie was overjoyed to see Barbara. It was lone-some where she lived, and callers from the village were rare. Besides, she had some pleasant news to impart. She was going to be married. Unlike poor Barbara's, Katie's love-affair had been kept profoundly secret. Now she enjoyed the surprise and congratulations of her friends. When she had told Barbara all the particulars she took her upstairs to show her her preparations. Her fine sewing was all done. It lay in dainty piles upon the swan-down coverlet of the spare bed. And Barbara, looking at piece after piece, felt a little exultation in thinking of the still prettier things she should have to show when Katie returned her visit. She was surprised at length to find it was already four o'clock, and said that she must go at once.

"I suppose," said Katie, "that you've heard about David Channing."

"No, I have heard nothing," was the answer.

"He is coming home."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes; he has had prodigious luck, and is coming home. It is said that he has become a rich man."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Barbara, absently, in haste to get away.

"Yes," added Katie, "he ought to have some luck by way of compensation."

Meanwhile Hannah Wylder sat patiently stitching after her sister went out.

"She can't have so much, but what she does have shall be nice," was her frequent reflection.

An hour, two hours went by.

Her mind was engrossed with the probability that an early day would now be fixed for the wedding, and in imagination she planned the work she should have to perform, with secret relish.

She was surprised when at length the clock struck four, and redoubled her efforts to complete the quantity she had set herself to do.

Suddenly a shadow fell upon her work of some one passing the window.

"Can Barbara have been to Katie's and back so soon?" she wondered. "Well, I suppose she has got her letter."

Some one rapped at the door.

That was not Barbara of course.

Miss Wylder rose and opened the door. She gave a little scream of surprise when she had done so, for Mr. Lovel stood before her.

Mr. Lovel it was for a certainty; and yet for one instant Hannah Wylder thought it was his wrath. Not because his actual presence was an unexpected, but because he looked the ghost of his former self—haggard, careworn, wan.

He threw a hasty glance about the room when he entered, and seemed relieved to find it vacant.

"Barbara is out?" he said, abruptly.

"Yes. Has anything happened, Mr. Lovel?"

"Happened? I don't know, Miss Wylder, unless it has turned out that I am a villain. I have come here to have you decide if I am. You will not be likely to judge me partially."

She looked at him without speaking.

She had closed the door, but both remained standing.

"To come to you in person, instead of doing my errand in an easier way by letter, is the penance I have imposed upon myself," he went on. "Also because I want to speak and to have you answer with that perfect candour that can only come through spoken words. I have come to leave my fate to your decision, Miss Wylder. Whatever you say is right that will I do."

She looked steadily into his face, inquiringly, nothing more.

"Have you ever told Barbara the story I told you?" he resumed. "I mean the story of my life."

"No; I did not suppose you meant me to tell it."

"I did not. I supposed that story was a thing of the sealed past."

She knew now what he meant, but she would not help him.

"It has come back, alive, into my present life. The woman whom I loved, Miss Wylder, before I knew Barbara, is true to me after all—has never been false, except in a petulant moment which I gave her no chance to recall."

Hannah spoke at last.

"And you wish to be free from my sister?" she asked, icily.

"I wish to do what you say—marry her and give her everything but the love I cannot control, or leave her to surer happiness with some one to whom she can be all in all."

"Mr. Lovel, I cannot decide such a question. You must see Barbara yourself."

"But you will prepare her first?"

"By no means."

"Then you will inflict needless misery on us both."

"So be it," said Miss Wylder, coldly. "Barbara will soon be at home. I will light a fire in the parlour, where you may talk undisturbed."

** * * *

Into Barbara's little white chamber came the first pale gray streaks of the early dawn, startling her as she sat in her low chair, her hand crossed upon her knees; her head sunk upon her breast—just as she had sat through the long hours of the night.

The coming light started her. She rose softly and began mechanically to straighten her hair and dress. Since that strange scene with Francis Lovel the night before, but one idea dominated her brain—to get away, to escape the humiliation, the shyness, the suppressed exultation at what had occurred.

Jilted! She said the word over and over again, till it seemed that nothing could wipe out the shame. She must get away. She could not endure Hannah's sharp thrusts, still less the tempestuous sympathy of friends, the scandal and sneers of foes; above all, she could not endure that David Channing should behold her defeat.

Away! That was a wide-word, with the world before one. Poor Barbara little knew into what an abyss of unknown she was rushing.

She packed a valise, took her purse, containing an unusual sum for her to own, some ten or twelve pounds, and, stealing softly from the house, made her way rapidly to the landing, where a boat touched twice a week, and slipped unnoticed aboard.

She learned a good deal in that day's sail that did not raise her spirits. She learned how little there was that she could do acceptably; how small a chance that she could earn her living except by ~~as~~ drudgery; and, worst of all, what a bleak conception the world has for a woman who appeals to it without references.

She had, however, taken the irrevocable step. Nothing now would force her to go back home. So the boat ploughed its onward way, drifting the girl into her pitiful destiny.

** * * *

David Channing's good luck brought him no satisfaction. He said to himself that it had come too late.

His first thought on his return was, despite himself, of Barbara. He looked for her, missed her, and naturally put but one construction upon her absence.

Once he forced himself to speak her name to Hannah.

"She is gone?" he said.

And Hannah answered grumly:

"Yes, she is gone."

She could not tell him all.

It came out finally, though, as murder and all evil things will. It came out with the most cruel interpretation that malice could put upon the girl's sudden flight, Mr. Lovel's mysterious visit and Hannah's obstinate silence.

Captain Channing went direct to Miss Wylder.

"How dare you keep me ignorant?" he demanded.

"Of what use for you to know?"

"What use? I will show you what use. I will bring her from the ends of the earth. And, if there is a stain upon her purity, I will wash it out with his heart's blood."

"I don't think Francis Lovel is to blame."

"Why did she run away then?"

"She is proud and vain. She could not stand the thought of being laughed at."

Channing covered his face with his hands.

"And you let her go—for that?"

"What could I do, David?"

He sprang up, straightened himself impatiently, and, disdaining a reply, strode from the house.

He had but one clue to Barbara's whereabouts—the fact that she must have sailed by the boat which left on the morning of her disappearance. That was two months ago.

Channing shivered at the thought of what might have happened in two months.

Day after day went by of fruitless inquiry and aimless search in the great metropolis, where Captain Channing found himself a stranger.

By means of detectives who watched Francis Lovel's ways he became satisfied that Miss Wylder was right, that Barbara's flight was no way due to him.

It only remained, therefore, to bide his time, and watch.

His luck had come in time, since it enabled him to do this after all.

He advertised, he watched advertisements. And he spent his time in wandering up and down the crowded streets, in the August heat, vainly hoping to chance upon some trace of the lost one.

It was just at twilight one evening that his eye glanced mechanically over the contents of a window of a second-hand shop which he chanced to be passing.

Several articles of jewellery were displayed there, for the most part tawdry and cheap.

But among the rest—his heart beat with great thumps, his eyes remained glued to what he saw—were the gold hoops he had given Barbara.

He waited to regain his composure before he went within, but even so he could not conceal the keenness of his interest, and the shop-keeper was proportionately indifferent and reticent.

By means of a bribe he at last elicited the hoard had been left by a woman whose address he obtained.

And thither he wended his way.

The object of his search proved to be the hoard of a boarding-house—a hard-featured, hard-hearted woman, from whom he eventually learned that Barbara had boarded with her for some weeks; that she failed to obtain work, and was much depressed; that she finally "came down" with brain fever, and was conveyed to the hospital.

Her board being but partially paid, her landlady after her removal helped herself to remuneration from what was most valuable among her effects.

"And this was how long since?" asked Captain Channing.

"About a month ago."

"A month! It seemed an age. In that time she must have recovered, or died. He must again live lost her."

It was impossible to obtain admission to the hospital until the following day. But he was not too late this time. Barbara was still within the walls. The delay that caused well-nigh distracted him, but at length he was admitted to the ward where she was. Was it indeed Barbara? So shocked he was by the change that he was ready for a moment to believe himself misled. Her hair had been cut short. Weeks of illness, bodily and mental, had emaciated her form to a pitiful degree.

"Barbara—Barbara," was all that he could say. His tears mingled with hers.

"No, I cannot go home," she said, sadly. "I have forfeited everything. Why did you come for me?"

"You know why, Barbara. We will not talk of it now."

"How did you find me?"

He unrolled the gold hoops, which he had redeemed, and laid them in her hand.

She seemed to understand how he must have come by them.

"Oh, David," she said, with a pitiful little sob, "what I have undergone since I wanted to give them back to you."

"They are yours now, Barbara. You may give them back, if you see fit, by-and-by."

She took them and pressed them to her lips in silence.

Captain Channing's telegram brought Hannah on the following day.

Barbara was at once removed from the hospital, and amid new and cheerful scenes nursed back to strength and health and her old beauty.

She never went back to her old home until she wanted to, which was a year or two later, as Barbara Channing.

When that visit came about Hannah remembered Francis Lovel's alternative: "or that I shall leave her to surer happiness with some one to whom she will be all in all."

He had done wisely and kindly in leaving her.

W. H. P.

On the journey of the Crown Prince of Prussia to the Vienna Exhibition the zealous Custom-house officials seized 1,000 cigars, his peculiar property, which, owing to a blunder of the Chamberlain, had not been duly freed at the Custom-house. The Prince is reported to have taken the matter coolly.

PORTRAIT OF TURNER.—A portrait of the artist, Turner, who persistently refused to have his portrait taken, has recently come to light. Of the many surreptitious sketches that were made of him the most successful was by the elder Linnell. Mr. White, of Maddox Street, had the painting from it.

CROWN PRINCES IN VIENNA.—The historical "pit full of Kings" of the Napoleonic era has been almost paralleled in the gay city of Vienna, where there were six crown princes at the same time, viz., the Crown Prince of Germany, the Prince of Wales, the Crown Prince of Denmark, the Comte de Flandre, and the Crown Prince of Brunswick and Saxony.

THE OLD, OLD STORY.—The Pacific Coast Indians are, it seems, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the "coming man." A belief, it is stated, exists among the tribes that the time of their deliverance from the domination of the white race is

close at hand. It has long been predicted by the old warriors and their medicine men, and within the last three years has gained an almost universal acceptance. They are taught by the doctrines of a new and peculiar religion that a new god is coming to their rescue; that all Indians who have died heretofore and who shall die hereafter are to be "resurrected"; that, as they then will be very numerous and powerful, they then will be able to conquer the whites, recover their lands, and live as free and unrestrained as their fathers lived in the olden time.

FACETIA.

SMITH has wound up his clock regularly every night for fifteen years, and only the other day he discovered that it was an eight-day clock.

"WHERE are the men of '76?" shouted an orator. "Dead," responded a sad-looking man. The orator was surprised at the intelligence of his audience.

A RETIRED actress has been teaching elocution to the children in a Scotch town, and the old people declare that all the young folks say, "bee-youtiful skoors," and "the nootie juke."

"ARTHUR," said a good-natured father to his "young hopeful," "I did not know till to-day that you had been whipped last week." "Didn't you, pa?" replied hopeful, "I knew it at the time."

"VEGETABLE PILL?" exclaimed an old lady. "Don't talk to me of such stuff. The best vegetable pill ever made is an apple dumpling; for destroying a gnawing in the stomach there is nothing like it; it always can be relied on."

A FARMER, not accustomed to literary composition or letter-writing, having lost a new hat at a county meeting, addressed the following note to his supposed possessor:—"Mr. A. presents his compliments to Mr. B. I have got a hat which is not his; if he has got a hat which is not yours, no doubt they are the missing one."

A YOUNG man engaged in teaching mutes was explaining by signs the use and meaning of the particle "dis," and requested a girl to write on the blackboard a sentence showing her knowledge of the sense of the prefix. The bright little one immediately wrote on the blackboard—"Boys love to play, girls to display."

FASHIONABLE ATTIRE.—Ladies in fashionable attire are generally supposed to look captivating, even to the eyes of unsophisticated nature. But look at the facts. A dog brought up on a whistling vessel, who had been absent on a three years' voyage and had never seen a woman, was so frightened at the first he saw, when he finally reached civilization, that he immediately went into a fit.

A WALKING BEAM.

Three friends met at a street corner, one of whom was as remarkable for his good humour and genial disposition as for his lean figure.

"It is singular," said one of the friends, addressing the other, "that a man with so slight a frame can carry about so large a load of sunshine."

"He is a perfect walking beam," added the third.

A DISAGREABLE TRUTH.

An old bachelor said: "There's a darned sight more jewellery worn nowadays than when I was young. But there's one piece that I always admired that I don't often see now."

"What is that?" asked a young lady. "A thimble," was the reply.

He was regarded with contempt and scorn by every lady in the room for the rest of the evening.

CROWING HENS; OR, WOMAN'S LIGHTS.

"Why shouldn't we crow?" said the speckled hen.

"Why not?" said the white hen.

"Why not?" said all the hens, as the question went round.

"We are as clever, as strong, as handsome and as good every way as that domineering old cock; in my opinion we are superior!" said the speckled hen.

"And in mine," said the white hen.

"And in mine," said all the hens, much impressed and excited by this new view of things.

So they practised, and stretched out their necks and stuck their heads on one side, all in imitation of the old cock; and a very remarkable noise they made.

"Hey-day!" said Rover, stopping as he ran through the yard to listen to the hub-bub; "my dear creatures, what are you at? Give up this nonsense; while you keep to clucking, you are highly respectable, but when you take to crowing you can't think what ridiculous figures you cut. Keep to clucking, dears, keep to clucking!"

DRILL INCIDENTS.—A story is told of a Scotch minister who, at the conclusion of the sermon, observed that the beadle, the precentor, and several

others of the congregation were fast asleep, addressed the beadle's wife in the following language:—"Jesus Gourlay, woman, waken ye man, and tell him to waken the precentor." The Edinburgh Courant relates an equally dull incident which took place on Sunday week in a church where the "minister" is a learned D.D., and an ex-moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. While presiding over his flock he was shocked to find that the majority of them were enjoying a quiet nap. At last, says our contemporary, his Highland blood could no longer bear it, and, ringing out the bell, who had for some time been giving a nodding assent to all that was being said ex cathedra, he determined to make an example of him. He accordingly paused in his discourse, surveyed the culprit, and then, drawing a long breath, called out in a voice of thunder to the elder of the church to "Waken up, Scott." The whole congregation were startled from their slumbers, and their situation, especially that of the sinners, during the remainder of the service, left nothing to be desired.

OF THE LONG AGO.

In tears I found the loved one,
The loved of the long ago,
And her sorrow seemed like a river
That ever must overflow.

She had torn all our ties asunder,
She had pierced me with pitiless score,
And left all my life in darkness,
On a never-forgotten morn.

She had wedded for splendour and riches,
Which I could never have given;
And while I toiled on in the shadow,
I thought she had found her heaven.

Oft, oft I had bitterly cursed her,
And prayed that she too might know
The woes of the heart she had broken
On that morn of the long ago.

But now, so striken I found her,
With poverty, sorrow and pain,
That I could not but heed those tear-drops
That rushed from her eyes like the rain.

And when she had told how her marriage
Had proved but a dismal dream,
Which had vanished away like the vapours
Of night in the morning's beam,
I said to the once dear loved one,
"The past is a book that is read,
And shut up and clasped for ever;
And we ne'er can awaken the dead.

"But come, I will clothe thee and feed thee;
And bring thy pretty child;
While ye live ye may both have shelter
In a home that is lowly and mild.

"All this thou may'st have, poor weeper,
Out of pity that comes from the flow
Of a love that for ever has perished—
The love of the long ago." N. D. U.

GEMS.

ORDER is heaven's first law, regularity is nature's great rule; hence regularity in eating, sleeping and exercise, has a very large share in securing a long and healthful life.

PLEASURE is necessarily reciprocal; no one feels who does not the same time give it. To be pleased one must please. What pleases you in others will in general please them in you.

In all thy desires let reason go before thee, and fix not thy hopes beyond the bounds of probability; so shall success attend thy undertakings, and thy heart shall not be vexed with disappointments.

THE best thing to give your enemy is forgiveness; to your opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father, deference; to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all men, charity.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

LEMON SYRUP is a very agreeable summer beverage and perfectly harmless. Take 10s. citric acid, dissolve in a teacup of boiling water, lib. loaf-sugar, the rind and juice of two lemons; pour over these about a pint of boiling water; when cool add the acid, and when strained a dessert-spoonful in a tumbler of water will be sufficient.

WEAKNESS OF HAIR.—Caustic solution of potash, 1½ drachm; tincture of cantharides, 1oz.; castor oil, 1½oz.; rose water, 4oz. Mix the potash with the rose water, add the oil and then the tincture of cantharides, scented with a few drops of

essential oil. Or, ol. amygd. dulc. 2oz.; lime-juice 2oz.; ol. rosmar. 2 drachms; sp. ammon. 2 drachms. Use either frequently.

ALE FINING.—The isinglass for finings should be put into a tub, and covered with some acid beer or vinegar; as it thickens some more beer should be added to it. It should be stirred about with an old stump-wood, when it ought to be about as thick as treacle. It should then be rubbed through a fine hair-sieve into another tub, and it is then fit for use, and about a quart to thirty-six gallons will suffice to fin the ale. The operation of dissolving the isinglass will take about six weeks or two months.

STATISTICS.

TAXATION OF THE METROPOLIS FROM 1856 TO 1873.—The following is a return of the total sums raised by the Metropolitan Board of Works for main-drainage, public improvements and other purposes, from 1856 to 1873 inclusive: City of London 511,723, St. Marylebone 336,821, St. Pancras 281,894, Lambeth 276,302, St. George, Hanover Square 338,736, St. Mary, Islington 222,089, St. Leonard, Shoreditch 107,292, Paddington 215,794, St. Matthew, Bethnal Green 56,347, St. Mary, Newington, Surrey 164,282, Camberwell 123,767, St. James's, Westminster 146,944, St. James's and St. John, Clerkenwell 74,192, Chelsea 91,046, Kensington, St. Mary Abbots 169,362, St. Luke's, Middlesbrough 59,404, St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark 65,624, Bermondsey, 74,785, St. George-in-the-East 61,862, St. Martin-in-the-Fields 84,383, Hamlet of Mile-end Old Town 64,860, Woolwich 25,512, Rotherhithe 36,649, St. John, Hampstead 46,587, together 3,577,758. Whitechapel district 91,471, Westminster district 108,168, Greenwich district 126,656, Wandsworth district 163,937, Hackney district 123,931, St. Giles's district 96,733, Holborn district 69,024, Strand district 89,622, Finsbury district 81,909, Limehouse district 71,503, Poplar district 103,114, St. Saviour's district 78,791, Plumstead district 57,976, Lewisham district 99,931, St. Olave district 56,879, the Charter House 694, Gray's Inn 3,972, the Close of the Culdees Church of St. Peter 294, Inner Temple 8,852, Middle Temple 2,916, Lincoln's Inn 3,250, Staple Inn 435, Furnival's Inn 694, parishes or parts without the limits of the metropolis as defined by the Act 6,297, extra-parochial 375, that part of Hornsey parish in former Finsbury division 12,707, the district of the Hornsey Lock Board 1,882, grand total 5,011,221. The amount contributed by the Board towards local improvements in the respective districts during the same period was 809,904.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Empress of Japan has set the fashion of wearing encoloured teeth and eyebrows.

The Garter vacant by the death of the Earl of Zetland has been conferred on the Earl of Leicestershire.

WEST DEEPING CHURCH.—The Queen has just forwarded a donation of 350. for the fund for the restoration of West Deeping Church, in Lincolnshire; and the Earl of Egmont has promised an addition of 10 per cent. on all subscriptions given for the same object.

A GENTLEMAN.—Lady Smith, widow of Sir Edmund James Smith, the eminent botanist, who was knighted by George IV., reached her 100th birthday on Sunday, May 11th. On Monday a dinner was given to 100 of the oldest people in the town of Lowestoft, where Lady Smith lives, and a grand dinner was also held in the evening to further celebrate the event. The town was decorated with bunting.

THE APPROACHING MARRIAGE OF THE DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH.—There can be no hesitation in now speaking of the engagement of the Duke of Edinburgh to the Grand Duchess Marie. They met at Hesse-Darmstadt a year or two since, and from that time an understanding has existed between them. During Prince Alfred's residence at Sorrento, though nominally staying at the Tasso, he has been constantly at the Imperial villa from morning till night. His Royal Highness will shortly join the Empress and the Grand Duchess at Jugenheim, in Hesse-Darmstadt. The Emperor will also be there later, and official publicity will then, no doubt, be given to the marriage that is to be. One difficulty existed which has been surmounted. It was proposed as a condition that the Duke of Edinburgh should reside a certain period of time every year in Russia, but he refused to bind himself. Something more than rumour says that the Grand Duchess will bring her husband 20,000. a year, besides 200,000., but yet a larger fortune will be the sweet, amiable disposition of which every one about the Court speaks.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. S. GUIL.—To preserve black lead pencil drawings—Apply a thin wash of icasin, which will prevent rubbing off of either black lead or of hard black chalk. The simple application of skimmed milk will produce the same effect. In using the milk lay the drawing flat upon the surface of the milk; then, taking it up expeditiously, hang it by one corner till it drains and dries. Observe that the milk must be perfectly free from cream, or it will grease the paper.

RICHARD.—The following calculations have been made in reference to that finest of all fibres—the spider's thread. A bar of iron one inch in diameter will sustain a weight of 23 tons; a bar of steel of the same size 30 tons. But reckoning upon the fact that a fibre only 1/4000th of an inch in diameter will sustain a weight of 54 grains, a bar of spider's silk having a diameter of one inch would support a weight of 74 tons, or have a strength nearly equal to three times that of wrought iron, or one and a half times that of steel.

LILY MAY.—Cold freckles commonly occur from disordered health, or some general disturbance of the system, to which attention should be chiefly directed. For either cold or summer freckles the following receipts will be found most serviceable.—(1.) Lotion.—Bichloride of mercury 5 gr., hydrochloric acid 30 drops, lump sugar 1 oz., rectified spirit of wine 2 oz., rose water 7 oz.; agitate, together till the whole is dissolved. (2.) Pomade for freckles, in place of the lotion.—Elder flower ointment 1 oz., sulphate of zinc (levigated) 20 gr.; mix by porphyration or by trituration in a wedgwood-ware mortar. In either case apply copiously night and morning.

E. K.—Chloral was discovered in 1832 by Liebig. To a certain extent it is analogous to chloroform. It is a colourless liquid, having a specific gravity of 1.52, and boiling at 202° Fahr. In contact with water it turns into a white crystallized substance, which treated with an alkali becomes converted into chloroform, and a formate of the alkaline base. Two parts of the hydrate of chloral are equivalent to seven of chloroform in producing sleep or anaesthetic effects. Several chemical effects militate against the use of chloral for purposes above mentioned, more especially the possible result of an injurious action on the blood.

AN INQUIRER.—The word altar sounds very pretty, and sentimental young ladies gracefully link it with the eventual matrimonial knot—a pleasant imagination without a doubt. Altars, however, belong either to ignorant Paganism or to sacerdotal Judaism, and, except in a metaphorical sense, no person exempt from vile unmannerly superstition will believe either in such altars or in the arrogant and really commonplace persons who affect magically to officiate at them. Men endued with reason and with conscience do not require a foolish brother mortal to dictate to them, to square their ultimate account, or to erect a futile piece of furniture called an altar. Any attempt to revive the Dark Ages in the nineteenth century is as impious as it is impudent and irrational. We may add that superstition is the constant and faithful pioneer of Atheism, as indeed in Italy at this moment. Why the old Stoics were giants when compared with these modern pretenders. Men ought ever to use their reason and their conscience, and to turn a deaf ear to all else.

W. B. A.—The first day and the starting-point, or zero, of the Christian chronological scale, was the midnight with which the 1st of January, 1 A.D., commenced. This was the moment, therefore, at which the first century began; and it ended evidently when, dating from that moment, 100 complete years had elapsed. The first century, therefore, terminated, and the second began at the midnight between the 31st December, 100 A.D., and the 1st January, 101 A.D. In like manner the second century terminated, and the third began, at the midnight between the 31st December, 200 A.D., and the 1st January, 201 A.D. It is evident, therefore, that the entire year, 100 A.D., belonged to the first century, and the entire year 200 A.D., to the second century; and in the same manner it follows that the entire year 1800 A.D. belonged to the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century, therefore, commenced with the 1st January 1701 A.D., and terminated with the 31st December, 1800 A.D., both these days belonging to that century. In like manner the first day of the nineteenth century was 1st January, 1801 A.D., and its last day will be 31st December, 1900 A.D.

JAMES A.—The following recipe, founded on sound, philosophical principles, has been given for keeping a house cool during the summer months:—Exclude all the hot air as rigidly in summer as you do the cold air in winter. Open all your casements early in the morning,

as nearly at sunrise as your uprisings will permit, for that is the coldest time of the whole day; but when the morning warms shut them up tightly, and be as chary as possible of opening them again during the heat of the day. A house well closed will keep cool for many hours while the external heat is unbearable. The secret is to catch the cold air when you can, and when you have got it keep it jealousy. If the outer air grows cold in the day and your rooms are warmer at the time, open the windows and get a cooling; but otherwise keep them all closed. Generally observe this maxim (a couple of thermometers, one inside and one outside of the house will be a sufficient guide): Warmer out than in keep the house close shut; colder out than in, throw it open. To this may be added the advice of keeping up efficient ventilation by the admission of cool air at the bottom of the house, and the emission of hot air at the top or by an open trap door.

E. FORDE.—A full answer to one of your questions would alone fill a page, and we can only indicate 1. Eggs are used as a constituent in hair-wash—particularly in the washes used in the process called shampooing. 2. Smoking is practised by the Continental belles, but—we suppose—it would be thought loud or conveniently naughty in our more strait-laced climate. Seriously, however, smoking never benefited any one. It is bad alike for men and for women. It is one of the most evil of the many evil practices of our day. In the presence of cold or of damp it may be a lesser evil; it is, however, always an evil. We can prove this fully. 3. There is no simple cure for nervousness, and there are a thousand varying forms of nervousness, each requiring a distinct treatment. But, in general, cold bathing, good and light food, no drink (unless weak wine and water or claret), and long walks. It is well to go as much as possible into society—nervousness having its mental as well as its physical inducements. Beyond this get some good tonic—say quinine and steel—in small doses at first. And never fret. In certain forms of nervous disorder galvanism may be resorted to with advantage. 4. Handwriting not at all bad, but still capable of improvement. That comes by practice.

HEADS, HEARTS, AND HANDS.

Heads that think and hearts that feel.

Heads that turn the busy wheel,

Make our life worth living here

In this mundane hemisphere;

Heads to plan what hands shall do,

Hearts to bear us bravely through

Thinking head and toiling hand

Are the masters of the land.

When a thought becomes a thing

Busy hands make hammers ring

Until honest work has wrought

Into shape the thinker's thought;

Which will aid to civilize,

And make nations great and wise,

Lifting to a lofty height

In this age of thought and light.

Miracles of science show

With their light the way to go;

Touch a tube of gas and light

Blossoms like the stars of night;

Touch another tube, and, lo!

Streams of crystal waters flow;

Touch a telegraphic wire

And your thought has wings of fire.

Hail to honest hearts and hands,

And to the head that understands;

Hands that dare to truth subscribe;

Hands that never touched a bribe;

Hearts that hate a dead unjust,

Hearts that other hearts can trust;

Heads that plan for others' weal,

Heads poised over hearts that feel.

G. W. B.

KATE T., eighteen, dark, good looking, affectionate and fond of music. Respondent must be fair, and good tempered; a mechanic preferred.

ANGELA, loving, pretty, and domesticated. Respondent must be good looking, of a dark complexion, affectionate, and fond of home.

JOSEPH, twenty-one, considered handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about twenty, pretty, loving, and domesticated.

EMILY, eighteen, tall, dark complexion, loving, and considered pretty. Respondent must be affectionate, and fond of home.

M. M., twenty-three, a domestic servant, fair, and blue eyes. Respondent must be twenty-six, tall, and good looking; a mechanic preferred.

FAITH, twenty-three, fair, good looking, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be pretty, affectionate, and well educated.

ANNE, twenty-one, dark, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must not be more than twenty-six, and in a good position.

EDITH F., twenty-two, tall, dark-brown hair, and blue eyes. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home and children.

FLORENCE, eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and considered handsome. Respondent must be about nineteen and fair; a clerk preferred.

HUGH D., medium height, good looking, and in a good situation. Respondent must be dark, of medium height, pretty, domesticated, well educated, and musical.

MIMIE, tall, good looking, fair complexion, musical, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a dark gentleman possessing a good income.

S. S., nineteen, a seaman in the Royal Navy, dark hair, brown eyes, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about eighteen or nineteen and affectionate.

W. C. T., twenty, a seaman in the Royal Navy, dark hair, and brown eyes. Respondent must be about eighteen and loving.

FIRST WHEEL IN MIDDLE WATCH, twenty-three, 5ft. 6in., dark, curly hair, and in the Royal Navy, desires to correspond with a young lady who must be accomplished and ladylike.

FRANCIS E., twenty-one dark, medium height, and with

good prospects, would like to correspond with a well-educated young lady about twenty, loving, and fond of singing.

JOSEPHINE V., nineteen, tall, auburn hair, blue eyes, good looking, domesticated, and affectionate. Respondent must be dark, affectionate, and fond of home and children.

PRISCILLA, twenty-three, tall, dark, fond of home and resolutely connected. Respondent must be dark, good tempered, musical, well educated, about eighteen, and thoroughly domesticated.

H. J. A., twenty-one, 5ft. 4in., brown hair, blue eyes, loving, domesticated and lively. Respondent must be from twenty-eight to thirty, tall, fair, fond of home, and of a loving disposition; a policeman preferred.

LEWIS BOW SEAS, a seaman in the Royal Navy, nineteen, 5ft. 4in., curly hair, dark complexion and eyes. Respondent must be about the same age, pretty, and of dark complexion.

M. P., twenty-three, a domestic servant, medium height, and loving. Respondent must be twenty-six, tall, dark, and fond of home and children; a mechanic preferred.

REGINALD, twenty, medium height, brown hair, dark-blue eyes, of a cheerful and loving disposition. Respondent must be dark, affectionate, domesticated, and fond of music.

MARIELINE, seventeen, 5ft. 2in., light-brown hair, blue eyes, and a clear complexion, and fond of music. Respondent must be about eighteen, with dark curling hair, and dark eyes; a saleswoman in a drapery shop preferred.

DICKIE B., twenty-four, rather tall, handsome, and loving, would like to become acquainted with a well-educated, amiable, and affectionate young lady about his own age.

PALADIN, twenty-two, tall, fair, considered pretty, occupying a good position in society, desires to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, tall, handsome, and living in the country; a farmer's daughter preferred.

JULIA P., twenty, fair, thoroughly domesticated, and fond of music. Respondent must be dark, of a loving disposition, and not more than twenty-five; a carpenter preferred.

LOUISA E., eighteen, blue eyes, auburn hair, considered pretty, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-three, fair, of an amiable disposition, and fond of home.

CLARA W., thirty, 5ft. 3in., fair complexion, blue eyes, very affectionate, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be from thirty-six to forty, and in a good position.

HARRIET, twenty, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, loving, of good family, and fond of home; a clerk preferred.

ROSA JANE, seventeen, 5ft. 3in., dark, good looking, affectionate, a good pianist, and possesses good expectations. Respondent must be dark, handsome, educated, steady, not more than twenty-two, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

FLYING GOR, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, 5ft. 5in., black hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, and good tempered. Respondent must be about twenty, medium height, of a loving disposition, and thoroughly domesticated.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

HOMELESS HARRY is responded to by—"Annie," twenty-two, fair complexion, dark-brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, and domesticated.

MABEL D. by—"Emile," twenty-two, a clerk, good income, fond of home, considered handsome, well educated, and affectionate.

HAPPY JACK by—"Alice," who thinks she will suit him admirably, she is tall, fair, and fond of music and dancing.

FRED F. by—"Lilie," eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes; pretty, and affectionate.

MARY by—"Jack's" Away," a seaman in the Royal Navy, 5ft. 3in., dark complexion, blue eyes, and affectionate.

R. W. C. by—"Agnes," eighteen, average height, fair, well educated, good tempered, domesticated, and fond of music.

DAVID B. by—"Eliza," twenty-three, loving, and a domestic servant.

KITTY by—"Edward M."

FLORA by—"Tom B.," twenty-five, dark complexion, and fond of home.

FANNY by—"Alf D.," twenty-four, dark-brown hair, fair complexion, of an affectionate disposition, steady, and a Good Templar.

OLIVER by—"Marian," twenty, medium height, pretty, and affectionate.

JUDITH by—"W. G.," thirty, red hair, and fair complexion.

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